



An indoor go-kart track (left) and the Nuclear Rush spinning coaster (right) deliver thrills and family fun to guests at Scene75 in Columbus, Ohio. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Making it big, Scene75 opens largest FEC location yet

AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The family entertainment center (FEC) marketplace is one of the fastest growing in the amusement industry. That very growth is what's paved the way for the **Scene75** entertainment center brand, which started with a single location in 2012 in Dayton, Ohio, to now open its fifth location just seven years later. Scene75 in Columbus, Ohio, opened in October after much anticipation.

Originally expanding from Dayton into the Cincinnati, Cleveland and Pittsburgh markets, the Columbus expansion of Scene75 marks the chain's largest center to date. Occupying a former **Macy's** anchor store in the **Tuttle Mall**, the two-floor complex is more than 225,000 square feet of entertainment options and family fun.

"We brand ourselves as operating the largest indoor entertainment centers in the country, so size is part of our strategy," said **Jonah Sandler**, who founded Scene75 with his father, **Les Sandler**. "But this is a large undertaking at the same time; [the former Macy's was an] unbelievable shell of a building for our uses."

Within the massive space, Scene75 has raised the bar of what an FEC can offer in variety. Outfitted with a cashless card system from **Embed**, being a home to more than 200 video games is only the beginning for the venue.

"We can have so many different components in our building that are taken from our years of learning," stated Sandler.

The facility boasts an indoor go-kart track (supplied

► See SCENE, page 8

IAAPA's Orlando global headquarters officially opens, an attraction all its own

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — The amusement industry has a new must-see "attraction" in Orlando, the theme park capital of the world, with the opening of IAAPA's new global headquarters. While not the typical attraction for which Orlando is known, the new 22,000-square-foot facility that officially opened on September 27, is a beautifully and functionally designed home for the association's employees, as well as a home-away-from-home for its traveling members.

From outside IAAPA's headquarters, visitors will notice a unique architectural wave pattern adorning the

building designed to represent the dynamic attributes of the attractions industry. The door pulls of the main entrance incorporate IAAPA's logo with its eight multicolored triangles arranged in a circle representing the sum of its unique perspectives and how, when inspiring each other, its members move the attractions industry forward. Within the walls of the headquarters, the colorful triangles of the logo and its theme of diversity-forward takes shape in the murals on the walls and ceiling forming icons of the different aspects of the industry.

The building is also a museum, of sorts, with several historic industry artifacts on display throughout the facility. These

museum-class pieces include an original doll from **Walt Disney's It's a Small World** that was part of the attraction's original incarnation at the 1964 New York World's Fair and a carousel horse presented to IAAPA from **Dynamic Attractions** and **Chance Rides**.

While the headquarters does provide office space for more than three-quarters of IAAPA's 75 employees worldwide, this building is truly designed for the organization's 6,000+ member companies and their employees who represent more than 100 countries. This is evidenced by the dedication of more than half the build-

► See IAAPA, page 6



IAAPA officially opened its new Orlando, Florida, headquarters with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house event. Pictured during the ribbon cutting are (l to r): Jerry Demings, mayor, Orange County, Fla.; David Rosenberg, ICAE, chairman of the board IAAPA and vice president, Monterey Bay Aquarium; and Hal McEvoy, ICAE, president and CEO, IAAPA. AT/DAVID FAKE





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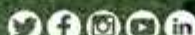
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

IAAPA's new HQ built for its membership



Slade

After three years of planning and hard work, IAAPA officially opened its beautiful new global headquarters building on September 27.

The spacious 22,000-square-foot facility is a short drive from the Orange County Convention Center (annual home to IAAPA's Expo) in Orlando. It is located on seven acres of land that was built to house the 50-plus IAAPA Orlando-based staff members.

What should not be overlooked is a trip to visit in person. According to IAAPA's top brass, the building was designed for its members, and to be used by its members. Inside, it features exclusive meeting rooms that are available for booking, special event space, workstations and even an electronic media/video production room. Outside, a spacious patio features a full kitchen and seating while overlooking the headwaters that become Florida's famous Everglades.

The IAAPA membership now has a home away from home when visiting the greater Orlando market. *Amusement Today* urges all IAAPA members to make time during this year's Expo to visit the new building, and, most of all, make plans in the future to use it, for meetings, your park or firm's special gathering or a place to come learn through IAAPA's interactive area and multimedia displays.

Congratulations to the IAAPA team for creating a beautiful new facility that the membership can enjoy for years to come.

Speaking of new facilities, construction is well underway in Plainview, Texas, on the new 10,000-square-foot expansion of the Mark Moore Memorial Wing of the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives. The building's steel, walls and roof are completed with interior work scheduled next.

See building construction photos on page 93.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



GUEST OPINION: Reno Deschaine, VP, IAAPA Global Education & Member Services

The power of learning

Some say success happens when preparation meets opportunity. And many credit lifelong learning with an endless spark of curiosity as fundamental to success. I think we all need a bit of both.

I am honored to be a part of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) team that focuses on providing educational opportunities to attractions industry professionals around the world. We strive to provide diverse events and programs year-round that inspire professionals to take the next step in their career, enhance their knowledge and skills, and learn from industry experts.

During the annual IAAPA Expo, we host our largest education conference of the year. For the 2019 event, we will have more than 100 educational experiences that include in-depth learning opportunities such as IAAPA Safety Institute and exclusive EDUTours around Orlando.

We are thrilled to have Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line, as the keynote speaker during the GM and Owners' Breakfast. Christine will share how our industry plays an ever-increasing role



Deschaine

at her company. We also look forward to the session "Game Changer: Creativity is the New Attraction," featuring Vince Kadlubek, cofounder of the interactive experience-creating multimedia art collective Meow Wolf.

In addition, the "Young Professional: Welcome to the Industry Forum" will be a must-attend event for young professionals who are passionate about the industry.

While IAAPA Expo is truly our busiest week, IAAPA's educational work does not stop there. IAAPA members receive complimentary access to all IAAPA webinars all year long. In December, we will host our second virtual IAAPA Safety Institute. The IAAPA Certification program is a great way for members to track their participation in our education programs while also working toward earning professional achievement. If you don't know about IAAPA Certification, I invite you to learn more today. Please visit iaapa.org/education.

I am honored to help industry professionals further their careers through IAAPA's education programs. I encourage our members to look to IAAPA and the many ways we can help further their pathway to lifelong learning.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Doug Stagner, Harves Entertainment

For more than three decades, **Doug Stagner** has been sharing his keen business insight, team-player attitude and innovative thought process with the industry, most recently as president of **Harves Entertainment**. This Chinese development company focuses on the design and development of unique youth experiences that connect cultures and generations and has a partnership with **Manchester United**. Doug was previously with **SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment** and **IAAPA**, where he served as COO and executive vice president of worldwide operations. He is involved in numerous industry groups and organizations and is a past recipient of the prestigious IAAPA Meritorious Service Award.

Title: President.

Number of years in the industry: 35, with plans for many more to come.

Best thing about the industry: No matter where in the world you go, people from the industry are eager to share and exchange ideas. It truly feels like one big global family.

Favorite amusement rides: Hyper coasters (not a fan of going upside down)!

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be... Working in the airline industry or a police officer. I was a criminal justice major in college and served seven years as a volunteer reserve police officer.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: I like to see challenges as opportunities. With the shift away from malls to online, along with rapidly emerging technologies, it's going to be really interesting to see how the industry evolves, adapts and fills the void in shopping malls around the world.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is... The two favorite days of the year for most seasonal park operators are the day you open and the day you close for the season. Been there, done that.

Something I bought that I really regret is... One of my mottos in life is: "no regrets!"

I'd love to be famous for... I'm not a big spotlight guy, but would like to be remembered as a thoughtful and caring friend, co-worker, spouse and father.

Favorite meal of the day: Not really breakfast, but I like to start my day with a cup of coffee and a banana.

The last time I wore tennis shoes was... My last flight. I dress comfortably for travel.

Three things on my "bucket list" are... I don't really keep a bucket list, mainly because I've been so fortunate to have traveled the world for over 20 years. But a three-week around-the-world trip with my youngest son Connor when he turns 18 is on the list.



Doug Stagner has spent more than three decades as part of the amusement industry and is a recipient of the IAAPA Meritorious Service Award. COURTESY HARVES ENTERTAINMENT

The fall TV show I am most looking forward to is... No time to keep up with network series, but if it's fall, I'm all about college football! I'll pretty much watch any two teams play.

Under my bed is... My dog's chew toys. She's the master at pushing her ball under the bed and watching me try to retrieve it. I've finally caught on to who is training whom!

If I had an extra hour of free time, I would... Probably waste it channel surfing or browsing the Internet.

Are you more of a steak or hamburger kind of guy? Steak — my favorite meal (when home) is a wedge salad, New York strip (medium), fries and a nice glass of red wine. When in China — Hot Pot! Can't believe it hasn't caught on elsewhere.

If I could sing on stage with any band, it would definitely be... With a band loud enough to drown me out. I can't sing!

If someone opened my freezer, they would find... Not much.

When people meet me for the first time, they are surprised that... I've been in the industry for such a long time. I always say I started very young.

My last late night snack was... I'm not a midnight snacker. But, on the rare occasion, a slice of cold pizza.

When I say vacation, you say... Let's hit the beach or a resort pool, hopefully in some warm exotic location, where frequent flyer miles and hotel points can be put to good use.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

A valediction for Vortex



On Oct. 27, the Vortex coaster (above) at Kings Island gave its final rides. The 33-year-old Arrow looper opened in 1987 as the tallest and fastest steel coaster in the world and featured a record-breaking six inversions. As guests enjoyed one last trip aboard the Vortex, the lift hill for the under-construction Orion giga coaster (below) began to rise across the midway. The B&M out-and-back coaster will feature a 300-foot first drop and will debut at Kings Island in spring of 2020. COURTESY CHRIS CLARK



Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

Rolling with a park 'mogul'

This issue's story comes courtesy of Jim Ashworth, a former vice president of (pre-Six Flags) Great Adventure (1974-78). Enjoy!

One of the most interesting guys I ever encountered in this business was **Warner LeRoy**, the grandson of **Harry Warner**, a cofounder of the **Warner Bros.** film studio, and son of **Mervyn LeRoy**, a mid-20th century filmmaker (*Quo Vadis*, *The Bad Seed*).

I met Warner when I went to work for the Chicago-based **Pritzger** family, which founded **Hyatt Hotels Corp.** and later bought **Great Adventure** in Jackson, New Jersey, from its original owner, **Hardwicke Companies, Inc.** The 1974-opened theme and safari park was the brainchild of LeRoy — then a flashy New York City-based businessman and restaurateur (e.g., **Tavern on the Green** in Central Park).

His Hollywood-inspired design sense was evident throughout Great Adventure, particularly in its fanciful restaurants and ride theming. In collaboration with Hardwicke, he spent millions realizing his vision. The property, for example, largely featured poured-concrete aggregate walkways. No asphalt for Mr. LeRoy!

One extremely hot day during park construction, the concrete crew was finishing a fresh pour when Warner rolled up in his red Cadillac with its eight-foot-wide, bumper-mounted long-horn steer horns ... right into the still-drying aggregate.

Unfazed by the glare of the crew, which was poised to attack, LeRoy declared that he didn't like the concrete's tint. "It needs to be replaced," he commanded.

An ego-driven misadventure en route to theme park greatness.

Lottie Minick is a 45-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.



The lobby of the IAAPA headquarters includes an interactive digital history center and promotes industry networking and connecting (left). An original doll from Walt Disney's *It's a Small World* (middle) that was part of the attraction's original incarnation at the 1964 New York World's Fair is on display in the offices area. An expansive outdoor patio (right) overlooks the headwaters of the Florida Everglades. AT/DAVID FAKE

IAAPA

Continued from page 1

ing's square footage being dedicated to member space with meeting rooms, special event capabilities, lounge, and expansive outdoor patio overlooking the headwaters of the Florida Everglades. A highlight for

members visiting the facility will surely be the digitally interactive area that tells the IAAPA story through the **IAAPA Oral History Project** and multimedia displays. The room includes photos and bios of IAAPA board members. Another feature is the ability to look up the association's members individually or

by national and regional demographic on an interactive map — again, highlighting the membership's diversity. The attention to detail and thoughtful inclusions in its design make the new IAAPA world headquarters its own world-class attraction.

"We are incredibly proud to officially call Orlando home and welcome members from all over the world," said **Hal McEvoy**, president and CEO, IAAPA. "We look forward to engaging and collaborating with members

when they are in town and continuing to serve the global attractions industry. This building is the result of three years of hard work and teamwork with our members and many community partners and organizations who came together to create this amazing space."

David Rosenberg, 2019



McEvoy

chairman of the IAAPA Board of Directors and vice president of **Monterey Bay Aquarium**, said, "Orlando is the heart of the attractions industry, and the perfect location for IAAPA. The headquarters will serve as the place for industry professionals to come together, to work, and to collaborate."

The grand opening of the new headquarters represents the final phase of the relocation of IAAPA's global headquarters from Alexandria, Virginia, to Orlando, which was announced in September 2016 in conjunction with the release that the annual IAAPA Attractions Expo would take residency in Orlando through 2030. The finalization of the move also closes out a \$14 million investment in the association, in its members worldwide, and in Orange County, Florida.



Rosenberg

"I am thrilled that IAAPA is part of Orange County's vision of being not only a world-class location for visitors and residents, but also as a premier business destination," said Orange County Mayor **Jerry L. Demings**, who took part in the facility's ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Increasing the number of companies that are headquartered here in Orange County is a main goal of our economic development strategy," Demings said.

IAAPA global headquarters is located on seven waterfront acres at 4155 West Taft Vineland, Orlando, FL 32837, and is minutes away from the **Orlando International Airport**, **Orange County Convention Center**, and world-renowned Central Florida attractions. Members are welcome to visit during IAAPA Expo, or whenever they find themselves in Central Florida. IAAPA also maintains regional offices in Alexandria, Va.; Brussels, Belgium; Hong Kong, China; Shanghai, China; and Mexico City, Mexico.

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► SCENE

Continued from page 1

by Amusement Products) directly across from an indoor Visa spinning coaster dubbed Nuclear Rush.

"The spinning coaster was a natural fit for Scene75," said **Len Soled**, whose company **Rides 4 U** brokered the purchase of the attraction. "It's a family ride. Thrilling for the kids, great fun for the older guests and something they can experience together."

Keeping that universal appeal in mind was key in the theming of the coaster as well.

"With Nuclear Rush, my intention was to create a theme, name and color palette that would fight the idea that this was a 'kiddie coaster,'" said **Maggie McCartney**, Scene75's director of art and design. "It is an atomic, radioactive theme that is the right amount of bright, attention-grabbing colors but nothing too juvenile that would make a young couple coming in on a date feel silly for riding it."

Nearby is a two-story Laser Tag arena. With equipment from **Laserforce**, the arena presents a fun configuration of theming and interactivity. There's also an emphasis on safety, as the gun vests themselves remind players that two hands must be kept on the gun at all times, sensing whenever a hand is removed.

"This is our best go-kart track, our best laser tag arena, our best party room configura-



Attention to detail abounds at Scene75 Columbus. Glow-in-the-dark sets and projected animation turn Blacklight Mini Golf into an immersive experience (above left). The Fire & Ice Bar (above right) features unique lighting and decor. The Drop Tower attraction's positioning within a balcony (right) between the floors helps lure guests to both levels of the facility.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

tion," said Sandler. "In all ways, this is the best of what we do."

Also taking advantage of the two floors of entertainment is a **Moser Rides** Spring Ride 12 tower attraction. With a loading station on the bottom floor, riders rise through a balcony on the upper level to the roof of the venue, then bounce down between the floors several times. The unique location helps assure guests visit both levels of the grand facility.

Other attractions include The Spin Zone Bumper Cars (Amusement Products), an XD Dark Ride from **Triotech**, a 4D theater by **CJ**, and a Bounce Inflatapark. The variety of offerings at Scene75 help lure what operators are projecting will be more than 400,000 visitors in its first year at the new location.

The new location boasts nine private party rooms, all complete-

ly separate from one another.

"We can also seat over 500 guests in The Grand Scene banquet hall area," added Les Sandler.

Hungry guests can dine in the unique Illusions Restaurant and Bar. Themed to legendary magicians and escape artists of old, the eatery is more than traditional food and dining. The atmosphere changes instantly as guests enter the restaurant, with unique lighting and an animatronic of an escape artist appearing overhead. In addition, the location hosts a hidden party room, accessed by a secret sliding bookcase entryway.

Next door, the immersive theming continues with the Fire and Ice Bar. Serving guests both in the entertainment area of the FEC as well as in its own uniquely lit area, the refreshing escape is one of four different bars offered within Scene75's walls.



The elaborate theming is extended beyond the dining options. Blacklight Mini Golf offers two nine-hole courses that not only have abundant glow-in-the-dark painted figures and structures but go an extra step in steeping players into their surroundings. Realistic animations — created in-house by the team at Scene75 — from under the sea and jungle life are projected onto the surrounding walls, creating the illusion that families are putting next to a man-eating shark or snapping Venus flytraps.

"Les and Jonah Sandler's innovative 'think big' approach to this industry is on display at all of their locations and in everything that they do," said **Earl Heller** of Rides 4 U. "They pour their heart and soul into what they do, employing a hands-on approach to make certain that each and every detail is done right."

That innovative style led to the Columbus location being Scene75's first installation of the HomeRun Zone. Featuring simulators from **HRZone** in partnership with **Real Yagu Zone**, the HomeRun Zone turns traditional batting cages into an interactive, augmented reality experience. Competing guests pitch to one another, via a pitching machine, and watch as a Major League pitcher deals out to their friends and family standing at the plate to swing away. Gameplay is not only interactive for the participants, but the grand nature of the action helps draw a crowd of onlookers from those nearby and those waiting to play.



The expansive Scene75 Columbus isn't complete yet. Exclusively designed escape rooms, one-of-a-kind Archery Tag, and the multipurpose sports field area dubbed The Fieldhouse are all poised to debut in the coming months.

With its rapid growth, the FEC market has become competitive with several brands making a name for themselves. **Main Event**, **Malibu Jack's**, **Topgolf**, **Pins Mechanical**, and others have all blossomed into new markets in recent years.

"Frankly, [competition] makes us all try harder," said Jonah Sandler. "Our intent is to continue to grow the brand."

While opening the new Columbus location, the Scene75 staff remains hard at work repairing the original Dayton location, which is temporarily closed after being damaged by tornadoes this past summer. Scene75 Dayton is expected to reopen in early 2020 with new attractions and a renovated facility.

•scene75.com



Scene75 founders Jonah Sandler and Les Sandler (above left) flank Rides 4 U's Len Soled in front of the brand's first roller coaster, Nuclear Rush, a spinning coaster from Visa. The augmented reality HomeRun Zone batting cages (above right) draw onlookers and cheers.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



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► Record-setting coasters coming to Florida — page 16 / Sesame Place San Diego announced — page 32

Fun Spot America properties are growing with new attractions

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — Fun is what it is all about for **Fun Spot America Theme Parks**, and the company owners don't want that to stop. To stay on that roll, new experiences and attractions are added annually.

Fun Spot America Theme Parks currently has three parks in three different locations. There are two in Florida, Orlando and Kissimmee. The third and newest location is Atlanta, Georgia.

"Business has been great for all three parks," said **John Arie, Jr.**, park owner and CEO. "Atlanta is showing the biggest increases right now with all the new rides we have been adding up there. Since we have owned that property just over two years, we have added over a dozen new rides and millions of dollars in improvements."

Arie feels the popularity of the Orlando and Kissimmee parks speak for themselves.

"They are incredible and we have built such a great foundation in the Central Florida market," he said.

The family-owned and operated company has taken the success of the parks and rein-



The 100-foot-tall wheel by **Technical Park** (above left) is a recent addition to Fun Spot America Orlando, Florida. That location also recently added a new splash pad (top right) designed by **Martin Aquatic Design and Engineering** with water features supplied by **Vortex**. Fun Spot America's Kissimmee park plans to have its latest addition — a **Gosetto** five-story fun house (bottom right) — open in early November. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

vested into them to keep up the level of excitement.

The newest attractions at Fun Spot America Orlando is a splash pad and a 100-foot-tall wheel.

"We listen to our guests and what they want to see in our parks," Arie said. "The splash pad had been the number one request-

ed attraction for many years."

The splash pad was designed by **Martin Aquatic Design and Engineering** (formerly **Aquatic Design and Engineering**).

"The water features were supplied by **Vortex** (**Aquatic Structures**) and our amazing floor with a huge Fun Spot America embedded in it was supplied by **Life Floor**," Arie said. "They were all wonderful vendors to work with, and we would recommend them all for anyone looking to add a splash pad."

The next addition to Orlando was a new wheel. Manufactured by **Technical Park**, Arie said it has "a spectacular LED lighting package."

"Many of our guests say it's like watching a fireworks show," he said. "Each gondola lights up individually and all of the spokes on both sides light up as well. This has given us a great street view for our guests traveling by the park."

After installing the splash pad and wheel, construction

began on two new attractions at Fun Spot Kissimmee. Those include a three-story, American-themed fun house from **Gosetto** and a 52-foot tall **E&F Miler** Hi-Miler steel roller coaster.

"This fun house is so cool, with so many different features for not only the kids but the adults will love it, too," he said.

Hopes are to have this piece open by the first week in November, in time to showcase it to guests attending the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo 2019**.

Fun Spot Kissimmee is the third home for the coaster. Its first location was **Celebration City**, a now shuttered park in Branson, Missouri. Its second was **Wild Adventures** in Valdosta, Georgia.

"We have not yet named it or themed it as we are allowing our guests to give us feedback on what they want the name and theme to be," Arie said.

The coaster has a triple out-and-back layout over 1,300 feet of

track and seating for six per train.

"We have a similar Hi-Miler coaster in Fun Spot Atlanta, so we know, with a 42-inch minimum height restriction, it will be fun for the whole family," Arie said, adding they hope to have the coaster operational by mid-November.

And if that wasn't enough, Arie said they purchased four kiddie rides from **Coney Island** in Cincinnati, Ohio, to go into Fun Spot Atlanta. Those rides are an **S&S Frog Hopper**, **Chance Rides** carousel, **SBF-Visa** swing ride and **Moser** drop tower.

"These kiddie rides should complete our kid spot in Atlanta," Arie said.

Fortunately, so far, the installation of all the new attractions at the three parks has not required the removal or relocation of any other rides. However, since the Orlando and Kissimmee locations are land-locked, that will likely change in the future, as the company is currently in the middle of master planning.

•fun-spot.com



Recently, Fun Spot America purchased this Hi-Miler roller coaster from **Wild Adventures** in Valdosta, Georgia, where this photo originated. The coaster is currently being installed at Fun Spot's Kissimmee, Florida, location. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

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'Twilight Saga' VR simulator attraction is a team accomplishment

Thinkwell links up with CAVU, DreamCraft, Framestore to thrill

ZHUHAI, China — In a high-powered collaboration, design and production company **Thinkwell Group** has led a team comprising media-based ride system developer **CAVU Designwerks**, integrated motion platform / VR specialist **DreamCraft Attractions** (a CAVU sister company), and animation / visual effects house **Framestore** in the creation of a cutting-edge simulator attraction.

Launched with the July grand opening of **Lionsgate Entertainment World** at **Novotown**, an entertainment and cultural complex, *The Twilight Saga: Midnight Ride* is one of several action-packed, technically advanced experiences in an indoor theme park that is pushing the boundaries of amusement technology.

The hyper-reality VR attraction, based on the **Lionsgate Films** romantic fantasy-adventure franchise, features characters and settings from the movies as it takes guests on a motorcycle thrill ride with Jacob and the Wolf Pack. The ride gives each guest control over a real-world motorcycle affixed to a state-of-the-art motion base and replicated in VR.

While jumping and chasing “virtually” through the moonlit Pacific Northwest forest setting, riders, represented by individual avatars, help the Wolf Pack lure out threatening vampires, defeat them in battle and regain control of the fictional town of Forks. Branching paths and choices of action encourage guests to return again and again for varying experiences.

Mark Stepanian, vice president of innovation and engineering at CAVU, which codeveloped the custom ride system with DreamCraft, called the attraction “a first of its kind. Guests can move throughout the *Twilight* world and interact with friends, family and familiar characters from a highly responsive motion base. Coupled with force feed-

back [simulated real-world physical touch] haptics, wind and scent, it is designed to fully engage all the senses. This ride makes for a truly groundbreaking experience.”

The attraction’s motion control is integrated seamlessly with the VR experience. For example, when a rider pulls the throttle on the motorcycle, the seat rumbles and the acceleration can be both felt and seen — an all-around sensation enhanced by 90-frames-per-second, real-time virtual media created by Framestore.

“We needed to design a ride that would completely immerse visitors,” said Framestore’s creative director, **Gavin Fox**, whose company produced media for four other Lionsgate IP-driven attractions and the general environment at the park. “So, we worked out a way to make the physical motorbike experience as authentic as possible — allowing [guests] to interact with the virtual environment in their own way.”

Midnight Ride also utilizes DreamSet, DreamCraft’s patented and award-winning modular head-mounted display (HMD). The durable and washable HMD quickly connects magnetically to VR display hardware. Headsets are sanitized after each use and require minimal operator input, making the equipment an ideal choice for guest comfort and high throughput.

Other attractions at Lionsgate Entertainment World, an endeavor that took about three years to construct and fine-tune, include rides and experiences based on the *Divergent* and *The Hunger Games* film franchises as well as a two-story roller coaster. Melbourne, Australia-based **Village Roadshow Theme Parks** is operating the property, which is located in a populous area near Hong Kong and Macau and expects to welcome as many as 1.5 million guests during its first full year.

—Dean Lamanna



A cutting-edge VR attraction, *The Twilight Saga: Midnight Ride* at Lionsgate Entertainment World combines a custom motion base system codeveloped by CAVU Designwerks and DreamCraft Attractions with 90-frames-per-second virtual media created by Framestore. COURTESY CAVU DESIGNWERKS; FRAMESTORE (STILLS)



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Premier Rides and RMC work with SeaWorld and Busch Gardens

Florida coasters will set records and wow audiences in 2020

AT: Tim Baldwin

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TAMPA and ORLANDO — No theme park chain is being bolder in its 2020 lineup of attractions than **SeaWorld Entertainment**. In an unprecedented move, all five SeaWorld and Busch Gardens parks are receiving a new roller coaster. Five different manufacturers have been called upon to supply thrilling new additions. Among them, Florida has some eye-openers.

In the vacation land of Central Florida, **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay** is ramping up the wow factor. The park was the first in the state to breach the 200-foot barrier with **ShieKra**, a **Bolliger & Mabillard** dive coaster in 2005. It has since been tied by a sibling in Orlando — **Mako**, a B&M hyper coaster that opened at **SeaWorld Orlando** in 2016. Those 200-foot records will be broken as a new coaster takes claim as tallest in the state.

Iron Gwazi will rise 206 feet tall. Built by **Rocky Mountain Construction**, its spring opening will bring the Busch coaster count to double digits — 10. The park is touting lots of superlatives surrounding the ride. Using the industry term “hybrid,” signifying a steel track on top of a wooden structure, **Iron Gwazi** will be the tallest in North America in this genre, as well as the world’s fastest and steepest. Top speed of 76 mph is reached at the bottom of the coaster’s 91-degree, 206-foot drop, slightly besting the current record holder. Hybrid coasters feature wild maneuvers taken at breathtaking speeds in smooth and fluid elements. The track length is 4,075 feet.

“We are excited to be putting an RMC coaster in Florida. Busch Gardens Tampa is the perfect location for the next RMC beast. This one will be such an awesome ride,” said **Lynn Alexander**, general manager, RMC.

“When Busch Gardens gave us the opportunity to build the tallest roller coaster in Florida, everyone was excited,” added **Jake Kilcup**, COO. “This coaster will be such an iconic piece right down the road from the largest amusement event in the world. I am looking forward to bringing this amazing project to life with a great partner like Busch Gardens.”



Rising 206 feet above Busch Gardens Tampa, Iron Gwazi will break multiple records within the state of Florida. The tallest section of the coaster is shown (inset) being manufactured in the Rocky Mountain Construction factory.

COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA; AT/RICHARD MUNCH

“Iron Gwazi will be unique in that it features three inversions and 12 airtime moments throughout the ride experience,” said Director of Design and Engineering **Andrew Shaffer**, Busch Gardens. “With this attraction being a hyper hybrid coaster in itself is a cool feat, and it will produce speed and dynamics unlike any other coaster in our park.”

Designed by **Alan Schilke** of **Ride Centerline**, the ride will utilize a former wooden coaster structure, although only a portion of the 1999 twin coaster will be retained. The new **Iron Gwazi** will stand 100 feet taller than the original. The former wooden coaster, **Gwazi**, had been standing idle since February 2015. After a five-year absence, this new incarnation will bring about greater thrills to the Tampa theme park.

“Iron Gwazi is the evolution of a classic wooden coaster into a modern icon,” said Busch Gardens Tampa Bay Park President **Stewart Clark**. “From the bones of the original **Gwazi**, a new legend rises, reaching taller heights and faster speeds, delivering the next-level thrills that our coaster fans crave and expect from Busch Gardens.”

“Some of the fun and creative details will be seen in the theming of the queue and ride vehicles based on the new crocodile theme. We will have custom queue music and fun

theming. While guests wait, signage throughout lets guests learn about crocodiles in the wild and what SeaWorld parks are doing to help this species,” Shaffer told *Amusement Today*.

Iron Gwazi sports a vibrant purple track that is nothing short of striking. New paint, theming and thatch roofing are already visible on the ride’s entrance.

Just 71 miles down the road, sister park **SeaWorld Orlando** will be unveiling a new coaster of its own, **Ice Breaker**. Named after the icy Arctic summits, the coaster will be located near **Wild Arctic**, a simulator ride. **Alaska SeaLife Center** will serve as a conservation partner on the attraction. Primarily dedicated to

marine research, education and wildlife response, the **Alaska SeaLife Center** mission matches closely to **SeaWorld Orlando**’s.

“The **Alaska SeaLife Center** is excited to grow our partnership with **SeaWorld**. For many years, **SeaWorld** has been a stalwart supporter of the Center, and particularly our **Wildlife Response** program,” said **Tara L. Riemer**, president and CEO of **Alaska SeaLife Center**. “We are grateful for **SeaWorld**’s contributions of funding and staff over the years to further our mission. This new collaboration will continue efforts to highlight Arctic rescue and conservation stories.”

Supplied by **Premier Rides**, the coaster will feature four launches. The ride begins

with a multiple launch featuring forward and backward directions. A backward launch will blast riders up a 93-foot spike angled at 100 degrees. **SeaWorld** is marketing it as the steepest, beyond-vertical drop in Florida.

Top speed will be 52 mph.

“The back-and-forth motion of the launch track will pick up speed each time, adding an increasing level of thrill every boost,” said **Brian Andrelczyk**, design and engineering, **SeaWorld Orlando**. “Riders enter the beyond-vertical reverse spike backward, so they’re looking straight down at the ground!”

“I’m incredibly excited about **SeaWorld Orlando**’s **Ice Breaker**,” **Jim Seay**, president, **Premier Rides**, told AT. “The awesome custom layout takes advantage of an amazing waterfront location where guests throughout the park will be afforded a fantastic and close-up view of the ride. I really love how the coaster starts with a one-of-a-kind quadruple launch that includes multiple airtime humps and a beyond-vertical drop. The ride is fast paced and includes a vertical top hat maneuver as well as lots of twists and turns and some excellent airtime, which is a personal favorite.”

“**Ice Breaker** adds more diversity to **SeaWorld**’s already unique and varied lineup of roller coasters,” said **Andrelczyk**. “It adds another option for riders [who are at least] 48 inches who are looking for bigger thrills but don’t quite measure up to the 54-inch height yet.”

Two trains will seat 18 riders each.



Supplied by Premier Rides, SeaWorld Orlando's Ice Breaker will feature four launches, a 100-degree vertical spike and a top speed of 52 mph.
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SeaWorld San Antonio building a signature GCII coaster for 2020

AT: Tim Baldwin
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SAN ANTONIO — SeaWorld San Antonio has some bragging to do. Currently, the Lone Star State has only three wooden roller coasters, despite the state's large size. Only one of those was built in the 20th century. With just this limited collection of wooden coasters in Texas, SeaWorld is taking the bull by the horns, or in this case, the ray by the fins.

Following on the huge success of InvadR at sister park Busch Gardens Williamsburg, SeaWorld has partnered once again with Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCII) for its 2020 addition. Dubbed Texas Stingray, the coaster is being billed as the tallest, longest and fastest woodie in Texas.

"We've added some great coasters over the years to SeaWorld San Antonio, but this is the first wooden coaster," said Chuck Cureau, marketing leader. "We're excited that it will appeal to those coaster enthusiasts who particularly enjoy the unique feel of a wooden coaster."

As evidenced by award-winning rides from GCII in the past, the popularity of a great wooden



Construction has been ongoing at SeaWorld since the spring.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

coaster is a specific thrill that a steel coaster can't duplicate. The feel and roar are distinctive to the genre. It also brings a return to a wooden track coaster to the city of San Antonio.

"This coaster is a true sense of pride for us," said Cureau. "It's the first wooden coaster at SeaWorld San Antonio. It's the tallest, fastest, and longest wooden coaster in Texas. Add to it that it's the only new wooden coaster in America in the upcoming year which makes it all the more special!"

Texas Stingray will climb to a height of 96 feet but using the

terrain will feature a 100-foot first drop, giving the park the claim of tallest. Track length is 3,379 feet.

"SeaWorld Entertainment is pleased with the structure and track of InvadR, which also uses steel structure and ipe wood, so it makes sense that they have returned to that setup with Texas Stingray," said Hunter Lawrence, engineer and project manager, GCII. "Steel supports require much less maintenance than wooden supports while still offering the opportunity to preserve the classic aesthetic of a wooden roller coaster. Especially in Texas, where tem-

peratures can get pretty high, steel is a good way to lessen the thermal effects on the ride structure. Great Coasters has done thorough material testing on ipe in a variety of track shapes, and we are confident in its ability to reduce the amount of unscheduled maintenance on higher-stress track sections. Currently, we outfit all of our turns and pull-outs with ipe as the top two layers in the track stack."

Situated near the park's rapids ride, Texas Stingray will interact with Rio Loco, bringing further excitement to both rides.

"SeaWorld was pretty active in the layout design phase of this project. One notable feature that SeaWorld requested was the straight drop, which caught some of our diehard enthusiasts and GCII followers off-guard," Lawrence told *Amusement Today*. "GCII coasters more commonly feature a curving drop, but it's always good to mix it up and keep people intrigued. SeaWorld also wanted to make sure to get a tunnel in there somewhere, the placement of which should offer a nice pop of airtime while riders zip through it."

In all, the ride is designed to offer 16 moments of airtime and

will reach speeds of 55 mph.

"This ride will feel out of control in the best way possible," added Clair Hain Jr., president, GCII. "I am excited about the way Texas Stingray will combine aspects of both a twister and an out-and-back."

Banking on some of the turns will reach up to 76 degrees.

"After the first drop, you have three very big, sweeping turns with highly banked track. This creates all the large, visually appealing structure that is already visible on-site," said Lawrence. "However, there is just as much thrill hiding in the low-to-the-ground sections that are more obscured at first glance. Looking at it through the lens of SeaWorld's theming, you could envision the large sweeping turns as the graceful movement and shape of a real ray, while the quick return run simulates the precise maneuvers of a sea creature darting through the water."

A 100-foot tunnel will add further excitement to the ride's finale.

Construction is currently nearing its final stages. Texas Stingray is scheduled to open in the spring.

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Axis, new concept from S&S - Sansei, puts a spin on coasters

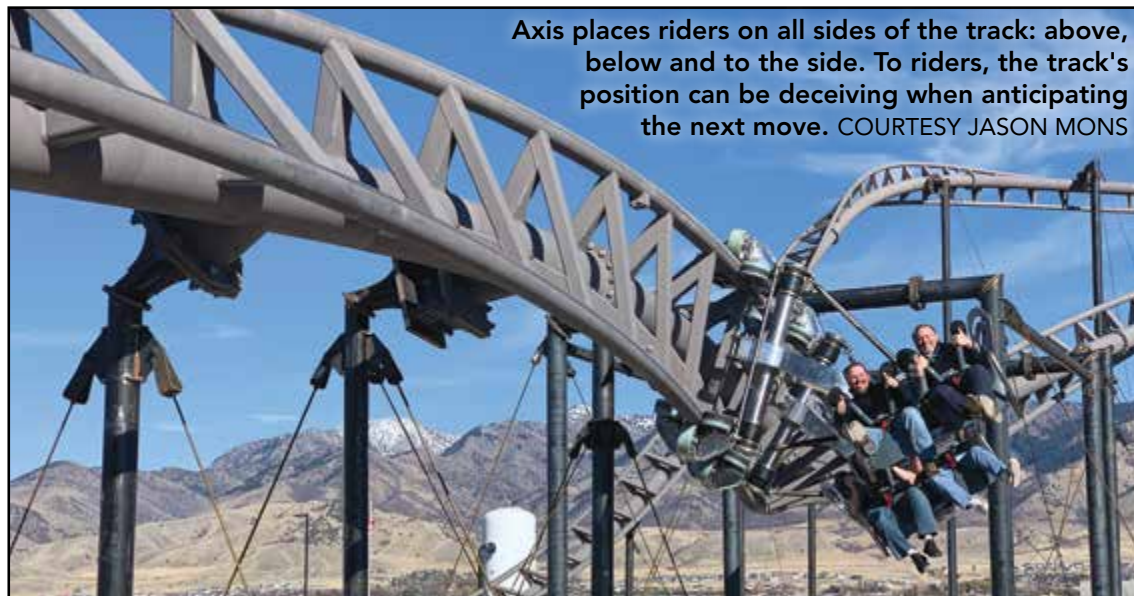
AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

NORTH LOGAN, Utah — Coming off a 2019 Best New Coaster Golden Ticket win, S&S – Sansei Technologies has taken years of innovation and engineered a dramatic new concept in roller coasters. Dubbed Axis, this new genre of steel coasters has hints of previous creations threaded into its core but feels like nothing manufactured to date. Top brass is beaming at the monumental leap in coaster design — and they should be. Axis is impressive in multiple ways.

“It has been part of a concept we’ve had for quite a while. This last development has been going on for about two and a half years,” said Merin Swasey, project development manager, S&S. “Today’s computer-aided design and engineering analysis tools enable us to do something like this particular coaster. It’s a whole new concept.”

A test track of several hundred feet adjacent to company headquarters in Utah has seen the concept come to life, meeting every expectation and validating each calculation. S&S can boast it is now proven.

Using comfortable vest



Axis places riders on all sides of the track: above, below and to the side. To riders, the track's position can be deceiving when anticipating the next move. COURTESY JASON MONS

restraints as seen on the company’s 4D Free Spin, seating on Axis places riders on an elevated swivel with feet dangling above the track. Depending on the bank and swoop of the curves, the speed initiates swing, flips or a sensation of flight.

“We have large seats and comfortable restraints. Some people don’t care for over-the-shoulder restraints, but this vest restraint is very free feeling,” said Paul Lattin, engineering director.

“In leveraging existing S&S ride technology, we have learned a lot about magnetic

dampening,” said Preston Perkes, executive director of administration. “As we looked at how the passengers would swing left or right or go inverted, it made sense to use that technology to keep the [ride experience] under control and make it enjoyable.”

To attempt to describe Axis’ motion is a challenge, even for those at S&S.

“A ride like this has coaster dynamics that are completely different than any other ride,” Perkes told *Amusement Today*. “When you think you might be

upright and following the track, the vehicle is going to spin you in another direction. It is coaster dynamics reinvented.”

“A main purpose of the R&D was to confirm the track layout reacted as intended,” said Jason Mons, COO. “We can now take this track and add more inversions, take high banks or low banks ... now we can extrapolate any number of layouts.”

What distinguishes this ride from anything else on the market is the unpredictable visual with the track. On any other roller coaster, a rider can

look at the track ahead and know exactly what will happen. Here, that isn’t the case. Trains soar and swing under, over and around the track making for a surprising ride experience.

On its test track in Utah, S&S has implemented its renowned air-launch system. The sudden burst of speed thrusts riders into the action immediately without the need for great height. At the same time, all the thrilling maneuvers can still be achieved using a taller, traditional lift hill. Because the approach to the ride’s dynamics can vary from park to park, each installation can be customized in numerous directions from family ride to high-profile thrills, lift or launch, varied terrain to flat land.

“When we started developing the concept, we looked at both lift and launch concepts,” said Gerald Ryan, vice president of sales. “Both are very marketable, and both give a different ride experience on the initial part of the ride. Depending on the footprint you could take one launch or multiple launches around a shorter track.”

Interested parties can contact S&S to experience test rides on Axis for themselves.

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Six Flags unveils big plans for park in capital of Saudi Arabia

Qiddiya endeavor to feature themed lands, rides, entertainment

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — A destination described as Saudi Arabia's first family-oriented theme park will feature record-breaking rides and elaborately themed lands.

Recently released plans for the **Six Flags**-branded property slated to open in 2023 in Qiddiya, a 334-square-kilometer resort community with entertainment, sports and cultural complexes now rising on the outskirts of Riyadh, reveal an amusement showplace of major proportions.

Under development by **Qiddiya Investment Co. (QIC)**, the park will be a key recreational feature of Qiddiya's first construction phase and contain exclusively designed attractions reflective of the country's culture. Qiddiya is a core element of the Kingdom's strategic **Vision 2030** initiative, which aims to promote economic opportunity and diversification while enhancing the quality of life for Saudi citizens, who had limited entertainment options previously.

"Our vision is to make Six Flags Qiddiya a theme park that delivers all the thrills and excitement that audiences from all over the world have come to expect from the Six Flags brand, and to elevate those experiences with authentic themes connected to the location," said **Michael Reininger**, CEO of QIC. "As a place that will create indelible memories and moments of delight, telling stories that reso-



The Grand Exposition section of Six Flags Qiddiya will be a celebration of innovation and the traditional carnival midway. Attractions include Gyrospin Pendulum, a swing ride called Expo Flyer and Colossus, a wood-and-steel hybrid coaster. Also visible is the gargantuan Falcon's Flight, a steel coaster that promises to break various records.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS QIDDIYA

nate with our guests is a central notion that will be evident throughout Qiddiya."

Calling the endeavor a "milestone," **David McKillips**, president of **Six Flags International Development Co.**, indicated that Six Flags was excited to be part of a project of such scale and scope.

"The Six Flags brand began in 1961 when we opened our first park, **Six Flags Over Texas**, which was themed according to the six flags that once flew over Texas," McKillips said. "At Six Flags Qiddiya, we return to that heritage by creating six immersive lands designed for Saudis of all ages who seek family entertainment experiences steeped in their rich culture and history."

The park's hub, known as **The Citadel**, is covered by a billowing canopy inspired by traditional Bedouin tents and will

transform into an interactive show space throughout the day. The area also holds a variety of shops, cafes and restaurants. From this central point, guests can pass through portals into each of the themed lands.

The six lands and some of their highlights:

- **The City of Thrills** is the embodiment of **Vision 2030** — a forward-looking, boundary-pushing, future "city" anchored in Arabic design motifs and the location of the park's larger thrill rides. **Falcon's Flight**, inspired by Saudi Arabia's iconic national bird and a symbolic marker of the country's culture and tradition, is expected to be the longest, tallest and fastest roller coaster in the world. (An animated promotional video of the extreme ride shows windshields secured to each of the train's vehicles and a tunnel-heavy course.) Another ride, **Sirocco Tower**, will break the record for the world's tallest drop tower.

- **Discovery Springs** reflects Qiddiya's relationship between the desert and the sea, with rides and experiences incorporating elements of earth and water. An aquatic wonderland, it will feature waterfalls, aqueducts and geysers as well as exotic plants and trees — providing relief from the summer heat by replicating a rainforest environment. Guests will discover a first-of-its-kind interactive ride called the **Sea Stallion**, which propels riders in a serpent-shaped vehicle over rivers, behind waterfalls and through trees along a custom-designed course as they control the speed.

- **Steam Town** is where the past and future meet in a rugged frontier town powered by steam. Themed around mechanical marvels and contraptions, the land's signature ride is the

Iron Rattler Mine Train, a coaster with a hydraulic lift that releases riders into a freefall plunge through a narrow, steam-filled mineshaft. Other attractions include **Steam Town Falls Water Coaster**, a splashing boat ride; **Steel Stampede**, a spinning flat ride; and **Treehouse Trek**, a climbing structure.

- **Twilight Gardens** is an enchanted landscape filled with flowers and friendly creatures designed to appeal to younger visitors. Key features include **Twilight Express Coaster**, which carries passengers through a majestic garden; **Critter Chase**, an interactive dark ride set in a 3D environment; and **Kaleidoscope**, a hot air balloon ride.

- **Valley of Fortune** places the emphasis on adventure in a setting of Arabian architectural ruins. The land's signature ride is **Spitfire**, a triple-launch

coaster which will takes guests into a sky roll before an acrobatic stall and a dive back to the valley floor. Other attractions include **Skywatch**, a scenic ride that lifts passengers into the sky; **Treasure Trail**, an automobile-themed ride; and **Aeromax**, a family plane ride that swings and rotates freely over the park.

- **Grand Exposition** is a celebration of innovation combining the nostalgia of the traditional carnival midway with feats of science and technology. Attractions include **Gyrospin Pendulum**, which swings riders to record heights, and **Colossus**, a wood-and-steel hybrid roller coaster with track length of more than 800 meters. The land also features an Arabian-themed carousel, a swing ride called **Expo Flyer** and a bumper car ride named **Automania**, with vehicles resembling London cabs.

Ground was broken in April 2018 for the park's host community of Qiddiya, located 40 kilometers from downtown Riyadh. The overall project will be completed in three phases, with the first phase creating as many as 17,000 new jobs. In addition to Six Flags Qiddiya and possibly other amusement parks, the destination will offer adventure and water-based activities, sports arenas capable of hosting international competitions, racetracks and an array of historical, cultural and educational activities and events.

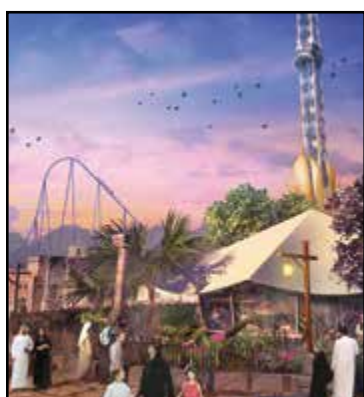
QIC is a closed joint-stock company wholly owned by the **Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia**. For Six Flags Qiddiya attraction previews and updates, visit the park's website.

• sixflags.com/qiddiya



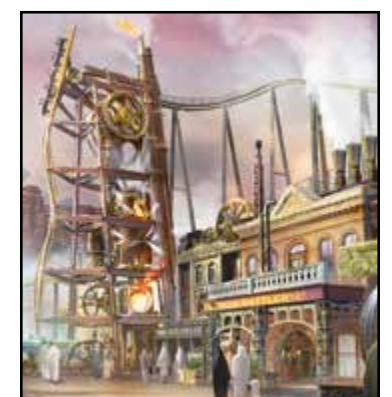
The park's Valley of Fortune emphasizes adventure. Skywatch, a rising, rotating scenic platform, and Spitfire, a triple-launch looping coaster, are among the ride highlights. The adjacent City of Thrills will feature Sirocco Tower, a record-setting drop tower.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS QIDDIYA

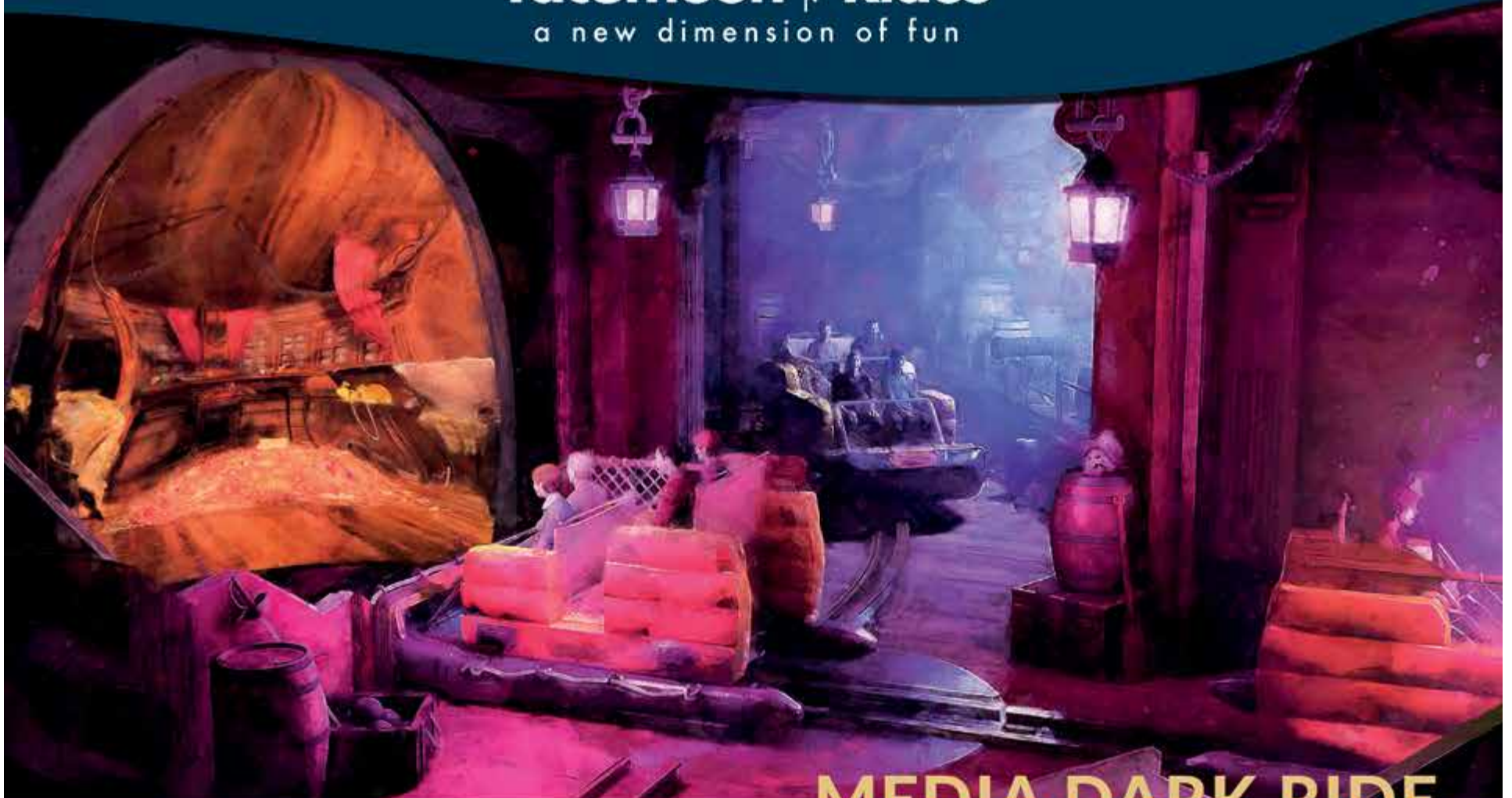


A frontier-themed land, Steam Town will offer mechanical marvels, including the Iron Rattler Mine Train, a coaster with a hydraulic lift that releases riders into a freefall plunge through mineshaft. Other attractions include Steam Town Falls Water Coaster and a flat ride called Steel Stampede.

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New China park turns to Vekoma for two of its coasters

Celestial Gauntlet anchors Fantawild Oriental Heritage Theme Park's thrills

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CHANGSHA, Hunan, China — Fantawild, operators of numerous theme parks in China, has opened its newest creation — **Fantawild Oriental Heritage Park** in Hunan, China. The new theme park is the first of a trio of attractions planned for the city, which are dubbed Beautiful China Trilogy. The country's rich culture, modern development and future will be a focus for the three locations aimed at bolstering tourism for the Hunan province.

Opening this season, Fantawild Oriental Heritage Park displays beautiful theming in which visitors are enveloped into the Chinese atmosphere. Among its many attractions, several are placed indoors, while other high-profile attractions make their presence known outdoors. Among them are two roller coasters from **Vekoma**.

The tallest coaster is Celestial Gauntlet. The daring ride is the park's most thrilling. Gold track and purple supports make for a colorful addition.

Charlotte van Etten, account manager sales and mar-



Big Top, a family inverted coaster, dives below a lake (left) for a dramatic moment — and view. Visitors aboard Celestial Gauntlet (right) dive into two tunnels. COURTESY VEKOMA



keting, Vekoma, said, "It is the perfect thrill coaster for adventurous thrill seekers at any park. It's a unique combination of thrills and sights."

The coaster features a wild tangle of 2,362 feet of track. During the ride experience, visitors are turned upside down in three inversions, dive through two tunnels and are taken by surprise through numerous directional changes and banked curves.

"Fantawild Oriental Heritage Theme Park expressed their happiness and compliments

to the Vekoma team for providing such an excellent ride," reported van Etten. "It is sure to be the next talk of the town."

At a height of 88 feet, the coaster doesn't demand a large footprint. The ride's site is 406 feet by 285 feet. Vekoma lists the ride as a Hyper Space Warp model. The trains feature four cars with 16 passengers per train.

Riders will be quick to relay the low-to-the-ground curves as highlights of the experience. Sudden changes in direction are also gasp-induc-

ing moments of surprise.

For those looking for something a bit less daring, a second substantial coaster installation reaches a wider audience. Big Top is a suspended family coaster from Vekoma. The U.S. saw a similar version installed at **Dollywood** this season, which opened to great acclaim and was praised for its smoothness. Like its Tennessee sibling, the first drop plunges below ground level, here into a lake. The train seats 20 passengers.

Other outdoor attractions

include a raft ride, a carousel and a spillwater ride. Eleven indoor attractions feature high technology in the telling of ancient folk tales and local culture: Marquise of Dai, the Legend of Nüwa and Lady Meng Jiang. The indoor attractions are housed in palaces that make for a striking skyline within Ningxiang Weidong New Town. The innovative, leading-edge VR, MR and AR technologies produce fresh experiences to bolster tourism and commercial industries in Hunan.

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AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Hersheypark amusement park in Hershey, Pennsylvania, announced in October the details of the new culinary and shopping experiences planned for the new Hershey's Chocolate town area where guests can play, eat, shop and gather starting in Summer 2020.

The new year-round dining and retail offerings were inspired by the vision of chocolate entrepreneur and founder **Milton S. Hershey**. Chocolate town will include the Chocolatier Restaurant; Bar and Patio; Milton's Ice Cream Parlor, with personal ice creamologists; the Sweeterie, a new scratch confectionery kitchen; and Hersheypark Supply Co., a premier 10,000-square-foot flagship store.

This expansion is part of a \$150 million transformation of Hershey's Chocolate town.

In October, Westchester County in New York sent out a request asking experienced restaurateurs and food concessionaires to submit a proposal to operate a high-quality, full-service restaurant and daily boat docking operation on the boardwalk at **Playland Park** in Rye, New York. Playland is owned by the county.

According to a local news agency, the business is to be open to the general public, those visiting the park or other seasonal amenities, including the miniature golf course, beach and pool, the Westchester Children's Museum, Playland Ice skating center and the **Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary**. The restaurant, per the report, must be open during the hours and days the amusement park is open.

The successful proposer will operate the daily boat parking service using the service dock, ramp and moorings located off the park's boardwalk pier and operate a boat shuttle from the moorings to a floating dock and provide staff at the location for all hours of operation.

The terms of the agreement will be five years, with the sole option of Westchester County to extend the license for an additional period of five years. Proposals were due by the 22nd of this month.

Center Ice Rinks, a family owned and operated company with offices in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, has been contracted to provide an ice rink for the first Winterfest at **Canada's Wonderland**, located in Vaughan, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto.

Founded in 2007, Center Ice Rinks' specialty has been its roll-on and roll-off rinks that can be used in a large yard and over the top of in-ground pools, tennis courts and more.

The ice rink for the new Winterfest celebration, at a size of 80 feet by 250 feet, will be a new endeavor for the company. The rink will be located at the base of the mountain that is the center of the amusement park.

Canada's Wonderland's new holiday celebration will run Nov. 22- Dec. 31. Plans are to transform the park into a magical, winter wonderland. In addition to ice skating, the offerings will include more than a dozen live shows and holiday entertainment, millions of spectacular lights and hundreds of Christmas trees throughout the park, including two 50-foot-tall Christmas trees on International Street.

There will be a nightly tree-lighting ceremony, holiday food, hands-on family activities like cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, pictures with St. Nick, crafts and interactions with park characters including Jack Frost, the Sugar Plum Fairy, the Ice Prince and Ice Princess.

Two out-of-town women were arrested on Oct. 16 on suspicion of theft for allegedly stealing cell phones from purses inside **Six Flags Magic Mountain**, Valencia, California.

According to a story in the *Santa Clarita Valley Signal*, deputies with the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station were called to the theme park for reports of theft.

Deputies arrested two 19-year-old females at the theme park after the pair allegedly stole iPhones, a wallet and purse that were left by park guests near a roller coaster.

Theme park security personnel detained the teens immediately after witnessing the thefts and summoned the deputies.

Six Flags Entertainment Corp. is considering a headquarters move, giving the city of Arlington a long-term tenant at **Globe Life Park**.

The Arlington City Council approved an economic incentive package last month that would reimburse the amusement park company for \$6 million in improvements to the space now leased by the **Texas Rangers** baseball team. The Rangers team offices are moving to the city's new ballpark, **Globe Life Field**.

In return, Six Flags would sign a 15-year lease for 40,842 square-feet of space, with an option of two five-year extensions. It also would agree to keep 120 jobs at its headquarters over the life of the lease.

Documents outlining the agreement said most of the money the city is committing — \$5.28 million — would come from payments the Rangers owe under an existing lease. The remaining \$720,000 would come from the city's year-end budget balance.

The city also is offering Six Flags a \$200,000 annual grant over the 15-year lease, totaling an additional \$3 million.

Six Flags, currently headquartered in Grand Prairie, Texas, would become Globe Life Park's third tenant.

The ballpark will be reconfigured for the **XFL's Dallas Renegades**, which opens its inaugural season in February. The **USL League One's North Texas Soccer Club**, an affiliate of **FC Dallas**, also will play home games there for the next three seasons.

Six Flags Over Texas, one of the company's marquee amusement parks, is nearby.

SeaWorld San Diego announced last month that its animal rescue team has rescued nearly 900 marine animals for rehabilitation so far this year.

The theme park's animal rescue team has aided 171 sea lions, 20 northern elephant seals, eight harbor seals, four Guadalupe fur seals, four dolphins, one pygmy sperm whale, one sea turtle and more than 600 marine birds during its 2019 season. The team also is caring for a sea otter pup that was rescued in Alaska in August.

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Legoland California Resort celebrates 20th anniversary year



Opened with 12 attractions on March 20, 1999 (above middle and right), North America's first Legoland theme park in Carlsbad, California, near San Diego, has grown into a thriving, 128-acre resort with two hotels and three gates — including Legoland Water Park and Sea Life Aquarium — with more than 60 rides and attractions. The park has marked the milestone with a birthday cake made from 51,000 Lego bricks (above left). In 2020, Legoland will see its largest addition ever with the debut of The Lego Movie World, a two-acre section based on the hit animated film franchise. The resort has helped reshape the highly competitive Southern California theme park landscape. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

New Sesame Place theme park to replace Aquatica San Diego

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SAN DIEGO — SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., and Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind the *Sesame Street* television show and its various offshoots and products, have announced plans to build a new **Sesame Place** theme park in the San Diego metro area.

The project, only the second Sesame Place in the U.S. and the first on the West Coast, will entail a transformation of the 17-acre current site of SeaWorld's 2013-opened **Aquatica San Diego** water park, located in Chula Vista, about 16 miles southeast of downtown San Diego. The new park is slated to debut in the spring of 2021.

"I've long cherished the partnership we've had with Sesame Workshop, and I'm delighted that Sesame Place is coming to San Diego — the first new Sesame Place park in nearly four decades,"



said **Marilyn Hannes**, president of **SeaWorld San Diego**. "Our new park will be the perfect place for families to explore and enjoy fun and educational playtime. I have young grandchildren, and I can't wait for them to experience this new park."

"As we celebrate Sesame Street's 50th Anniversary, we are excited to share the news of a major opportunity for kids and families to connect with and learn from the brand and its beloved characters," said **Steve Youngwood**, Sesame Workshop's president,

media and education, and COO. "The opening of Sesame Place San Diego will give guests a unique and powerful way to experience *Sesame Street*, enable us to connect with even more families and further our educational mission."

The new park will feature the combination of learning and fun for which *Sesame Street* is known in a highly immersive way — offering seven family rides (including a roller coaster), 11 water attractions and slides, live character shows, parades and interactive experiences.

While Sesame Place San Diego extends SeaWorld Entertainment's commitment to the local community, it also will establish a premiere tourist destination for young families. Additionally, it places the company in a more strategically advantageous marketing position in the region relative to Legoland California Resort, which has long challenged the SeaWorld and Aquatica parks in San Diego for the family recreational dollar.

The original Sesame Place, the only U.S. theme park based entirely on the program, opened outside Philadelphia in 1980.

"We are thrilled to be able to grow the presence of Sesame Place theme parks in the United States, and San Diego is the perfect complement to our Philadelphia location," said **Marc Swanson**, SeaWorld Entertainment's interim CEO. "We share Sesame Workshop's goal of educating and entertaining generations of children, and the opening of a sec-

ond park... furthers our company mission to provide guests with extraordinary experiences."

Sesame Place San Diego will be a Certified Autism Center (CAC), mirroring its Philadelphia sister property, which was the first theme park to achieve the designation. Staff-wide autism sensitivity and awareness training will be completed prior to the park's debut, and robust planning resources, including a park-specific sensory guide, will be featured on its website — making it easier for parents to plan activities for their children's specific needs and accommodations. Quiet spaces with adjustable lighting and comfortable seating will be incorporated into the park's design.

"We are proud to be opening this new park as a [CAC] and are committed in our efforts to offer families inclusive activities for children with autism and other special abilities," Swanson said.

SeaWorld has been Sesame Workshop's exclusive theme park partner in the U.S. for nearly 40 years. Sesame Street Bay of Play opened at SeaWorld San Diego in 2008, and **SeaWorld Orlando** recently opened Sesame Street Land, an area with six themed rides, more than 30 educational interactive activities and the park's first-ever parade. There is also a Sesame Street land inside **SeaWorld San Antonio**.

While construction on Sesame Place San Diego begins this fall, it will not impact Aquatica's Memorial Day weekend 2020 opening for its final season.

•sesameplace.com/san-diego

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New Jersey's Clementon Park is searching for new ownership



Clementon Park, one of the oldest continuously operating parks in the country, is up for sale. AT/TIM BALDWIN

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

CLEMENTON, N.J. — Clementon Holdings LLC, owners of Clementon Park and Splash World, have asked Premier Parks LLC, the managing company of the 112-year-old facility, to assist with the sale of the property.

"There are several potential buyers looking at the opportunity," said Debbie Evans, Evans Marketing Co., Premier Parks,

marketing firm. "The company can't comment on the status of the sales process at this time."

There was no indication if the park will close for good or if the potential buyers want to purchase the property and keep the park running.

Rumors about what was happening at the 27-acre facility circulated for several months. The first indication that something could be happening at the park was when it closed its season a week early without notice.

Ticketed guests arriving in what they thought would be final week of the season, were told the park was closed and they would have to get their money back from corporate.

Next was the cancellation of the park's Fall Fest that had been set for Oct. 19. This would have been the third annual festival.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported in an article that **Jamie Messenger**, the organizer for the Fall Fest, who had spent months organizing the event, expected to draw thousands of visitors.

The story stated that she was "shocked to receive word just weeks before the planned date that the venue had closed early for the season, forcing her to cancel the one-day jambo-ree. Because of the short notice and the scope of the Fall Fest — featuring food vendors, entertainment stages, a car show, a chili contest, and a beer garden dependent on Clementon Park's liquor license — Messenger said she couldn't move the annual event, forcing her to call it off."

Clementon Park is one of the oldest continuously operating amusement parks in the U.S. Its grounds feature thrill rides, family rides and a water park with several massive slides, among other attractions.

In March of this year, park officials announced that the park would open its 2019 season in May with four new rides including a Pirate Ship manufactured by **SBE/Visa Group**, a Scrambler by **Eli Bridge**, a Tilt-A-Whirl by **Larson Intl** and Dragon Coaster by **Wisdom**. The Pirate Ship was a brand-new ride and the other three were purchased from another location.

Clementon Park and Splash World is the Delaware Valley's only combination theme and water park. It traditionally draws residents of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Since 2008, park officials have made major, modern additions to the park including rides, slides and a 23,000 square-foot wave pool.

The park was founded by New Jersey Assemblyman **Theodore Gibbs** as a simple swimming operation on Clementon Lake and grew steadily over the years.

The new attractions joined 24 existing rides at the facility.

While Clementon's website remains live, the park's social media accounts have been shut down and the website isn't advertising for 2020 passes.

Clementon Park and Splash World was last sold in 2011.

•clementonpark.com



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Huss Park Attractions

Gerstlauer's unique Fury changes the rules at Bobbejaanland



A trainload of riders soars through Fury's layout in a backward direction. COURTESY GERSTLAUER

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LICHTAART, Antwerp, Belgium — **Bobbejaanland** and **Gerstlauer** have teamed up to completely think outside the box.

Steel coasters truly came into prominence in the 1970s with the innovation of corkscrews and loops. From there, the 1980s and '90s offered new variations of sitting (or not) and creative innovations to keep the steel coaster attraction new and different. That spirit of invention is still alive today.

Enter Fury.

"Fury is the first roller coaster in the world where riders can decide on the spot, whether to ride in the forward or backward direction," said **Coen Nieuwenstein**, managing director of **ARC bv.**, Gerstlauer's sales partner in Europe. "It's two rides, but

one roller coaster. This fantastic attraction is the result of the joint efforts of the Bobbejaanland and Gerstlauer teams."

Once seated, riders have buttons on their lap bar restraints. Each passenger can vote to traverse the layout in a forward position or backward position. Until the ride is dispatched onto a turntable, the direction of travel is not known, adding to the anticipation.

"Fury is truly a unique coaster because it is interactive," said **Adam Sandy**, president of business development, **Ride Entertainment**, the U.S. representative for Gerstlauer. "The majority vote chooses the train's direction. The ride starts with a triple LSM launch before guests soar over 40 meters in the air. An intense series of inversions lead into one of the most exciting parts of the attraction, a beyond-ver-

tical spike with massive hang time at the end of the ride. Fury is a master class in thrills and further evidence of Gerstlauer's design evolution."

If a tie results among the 12 passengers instead of a majority vote, the coaster's CPU makes a determination at random.

Starting with a back-and-forth triple launch, riders eventually reach a top speed of 66 mph. After cresting the tallest point at 141 feet, the layout is a wicked snarl of snappy turns, top hat hills, a corkscrew and a pairing of stretched elements that turn riders upside down in unusual ways. There are three inversions in all.

Fury features two reverse spikes. The first is involved in the ride's triple launch. After completing the circuit of almost 2,000 feet — portions of which

► See FURY, page 37

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► **FURY**
Continued from page 36

are traveled both directions — trains climb into the beyond vertical spike, become weightless and roll back to the magnetic braking system. A second turntable aligns the track to return to the station.

The new coaster operates with two trains.

When asked by *Amusement Today* to identify the ride's most popular feature: "The speed," answered **Peggy Verelst**, creative and commercial director, Bobbejaanland. "We do 106.6 km an hour, which is very, very impactful. However, the voting at the station before embarking has become the most fun. Forward or backward? You will only know which direction when the train arrives at the turning table, not earlier. Can you feel the excitement?"

The attraction boasts an original orchestrated soundtrack from **IMAscore**. Upon the initial launch, riders are propelled past the wings and scales of a dragon, which is also appreciated from the queue.

Verelst commented that Fury has had a positive impact on attendance: "We launched the ride to the public at the end of June. In the beginning we had some bad luck with the weather, but as of August, Fury has really driven attendance."

Fury is a high-profile icon to an area called Land of Legends. Bobbejaanland recently took the existing area and transformed it into a themed land focused on the four elements: earth, wind, fire and water. The Gerstlauer Typhoon coaster now represents wind, a **Huss Giant Frisbee** (Sledgehammer)

is linked to earth, Fury brings the fire in vivid orange, and a water play area rounds out the complement.

"Fury and Land of Legends do everything we had hoped for," said Verelst.

Park officials have declared that Fury is the largest investment in Bobbejaanland's history.

•bobbejaanland.be

The coaster's layout features an engaging mix of drops, curves and three inversions.
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Interactive dark ride coming to Wild- & Freizeitpark Klotten



COCHEM, Germany — Leisure and wildlife park Wild- & Freizeitpark Klotten announced plans for the new interactive dark ride Kunibert's Adventure. The castle-themed adventure follows the knight Kunibert, a German legend, and a gathering of ghosts coming together to celebrate his bravery. During the ride, guests will discover the ghost life in the castle by lighting candles with a special interactive matchstick. Lagotronics Projects is providing the ride package, which is scheduled to open in April 2020. COURTESY LAGOTRONICS

The Six Swans, Efteling's newest fairytale, arrives

KAATSHEUVEL, The Netherlands — Efteling welcomed the first visitors to its 30th fairytale in the Fairytale Forest. The new Six Swans have landed between the park's Snow White and Cinderella attractions.

"Fairytale has been the origin of Efteling since 1952. That is why we continue to enrich the Fairytale Forest with new stories. This relatively unknown fairytale is a classic — a beautiful and interactive

addition that underlines our role as guardian of the fairytale," said Fons Jurgens, CEO of Efteling.

Taken from the Brothers Grimm fairytale, The Six Swans tells the story of Elisa, the brave younger sister who has to break the spell cast upon her brothers.

The 30th fairytale in the beating heart of the Dutch theme park can be experienced in two unique ways: on the back of a swan or by entering the castle on foot.

Visitors enter the castle and meet Elisa. Her six brothers have been turned into swans by their jealous stepmother. To break the spell, she must not speak or laugh for six years and must knit six shirts made from aster flowers. Inside the castle, Elisa is surrounded by 606 twinkling aster flowers — 101 asters per brother — that light up when the swans pass. Outside, around the hidden castle, there are thousands of aster flowers, which play an important role in the fairytale.

The Six Swans is the first fairytale in the Fairytale Forest that visitors can choose how they'll experience the attraction. Visitors can sit on the back of a three-meter-long swan or enter the castle on foot and view Elisa from the side. This gives an extra dimension and provides a unique experience for young and old.

In celebration of reaching the 30th milestone, guests can also visit a temporary exhibition at the Efteling Museum, which is entirely themed around the 30 fairytales in the Fairytale Forest.

•efteling.com

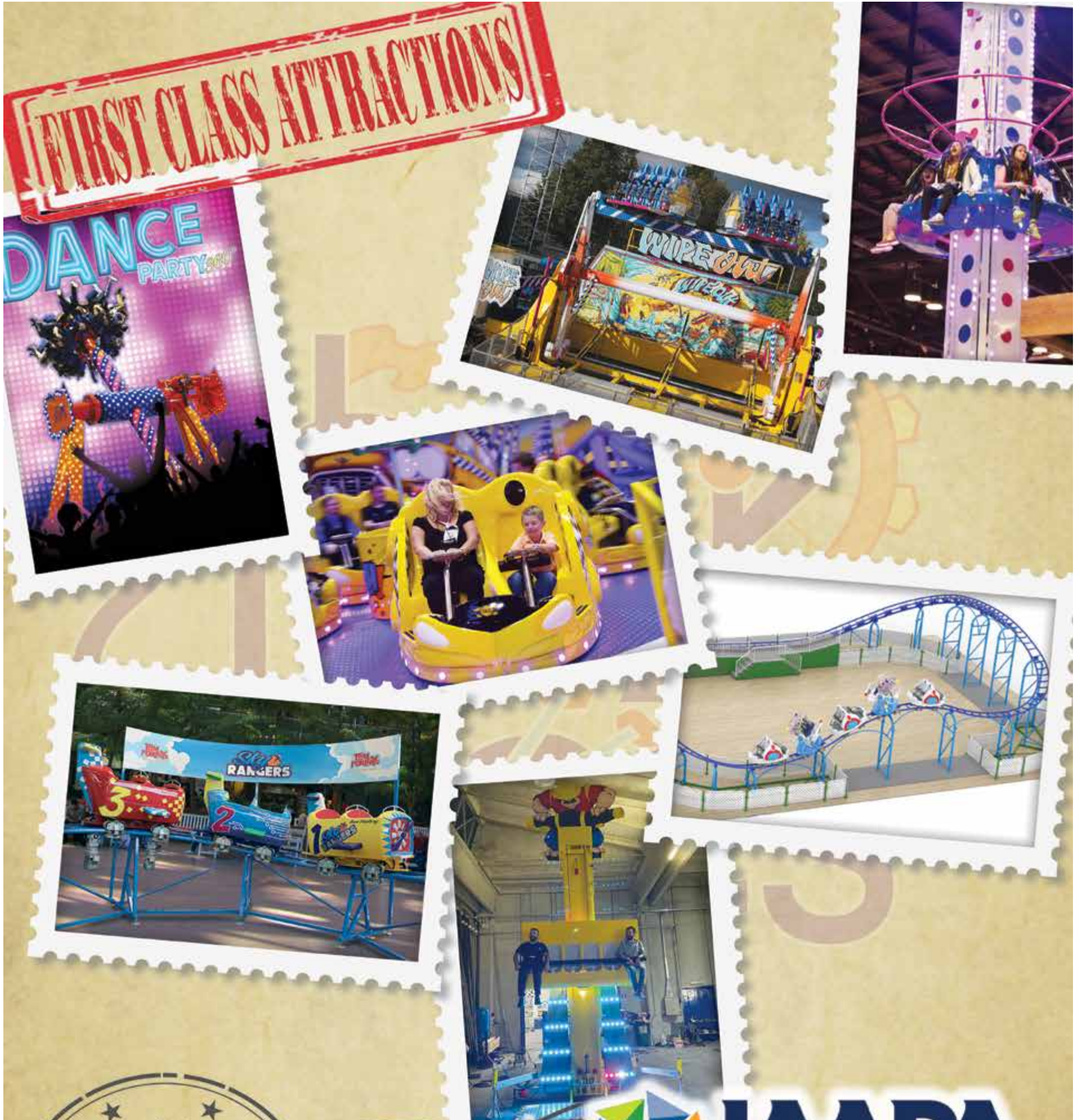


Visitors sail on a three-meter-long swan (above) or enter the castle on foot (below). COURTESY EFTLING



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Super Air Race succeeds at Luna Park, coming to Texas

NEW YORK — In May, Zamperla removed its original Air Race attractions from Luna Park in Brooklyn, New York, and replaced it with the new 50-foot-tall Super Air Race.

The first year of operation was a winning success, with an increased ridership and popularity of the new version of the ride.

In 2020, Six Flags Fiesta Texas will be adding its own Super Air Race to its ride lineup. Dubbed Daredevil Dive Flying Machines, the steampunk-themed attraction will also feature a unique soundtrack as riders enjoy.

"Guests will simulate the

COURTESY ZAMPERLA



breathtaking aerobatic maneuvers of an expert stunt pilot as they swoop and spin through numerous barrel rolls and exhilarating loops and dives," said Jeffrey Siebert, park president of Six Flags Fiesta Texas.

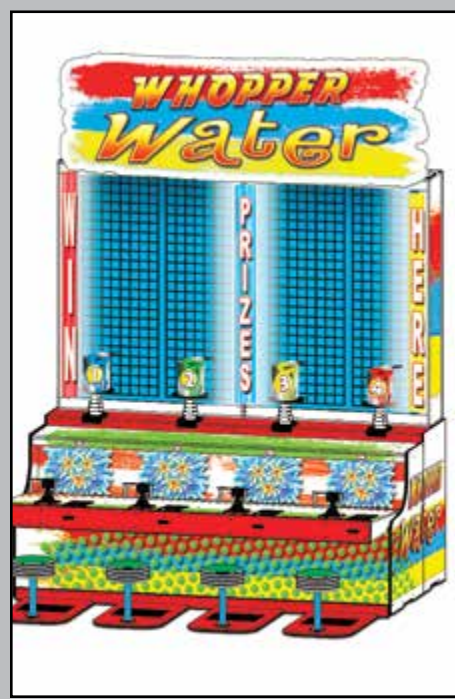
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Bob's Space Racers rolling out new games and products for 2019



Bob's Space Racers (BSR) has revamped the Hang Time Challenge Game. The game still has all of the same features that were built into the original design, such as an automatic sensor-controlled bar lift system, electronically-controlled sounds, game spiels and an accounting system. BSR has redesigned the frame to allow for easier installation and added an even higher lift to accommodate taller guests. The two-player model has a competitive play feature where players attempt to hold on longer than one another, adding a new dynamic to the game. COURTESY BOB'S SPACE RACERS

BSR's Whopper Water FEC-style Attendant Free Water Race Game, attendant-free water race game augments the company's ever-growing lineup of labor-free games. With the increasing demand for labor in FECs, arcades and theme parks, BSR's attendant-free games have become increasingly popular. COURTESY BOB'S SPACE RACERS





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From hand cars to umbrella rides, a history of Hampton Amusement Co.

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — If you're a baby boomer, chances are you remember seeing the "Used Car Of The Week" under a tent at a local automobile dealership as that tactic was a fantastic way to promote sales.

For late St. Louis, Missouri, artist **Ted (Theodore) Sneed**, who did professional pin stripping on older vehicles, the canvas car lot covers sparked an idea that would eventually become an icon in the amusement industry.

Sneed was the founder of the former **Hampton Amusement Co.**, which for years produced a number of children's rides including those draped by huge colorful umbrellas.

"He started with a kiddie car ride in the 1940s," recalled **Richard Tinsley**, who was Sneed's first employee in 1953. "I started working for him right out of high school and Ted had already built two prototype car rides."

Tinsley, the owner of regional carnival **Tinsley's Amusements** of High Mill, Missouri, said Sneed took his rides to Arizona and positioned them on street corners and with "pony track" (children's pony rides) operators.

"Ted always propositioned someone with a pony track to help draw attention to his kiddie ride and hoped to sell it when the season ended," Tinsley, 83, added. He worked for Sneed seven years before starting his own show in 1964.

Named after a street

Returning home with one of the prototypes, Sneed reportedly ran the ride on the corner of Hampton Avenue in St. Louis, which prompted him to name his company after that thoroughfare. The business actually operated on Oakdale Street in the city.



These ads appeared in industry publications years ago when Hampton Amusement Co. started making a name for itself. One of the first successful attractions presented by the firm was the Kiddie Flyer Hand Car Ride (above middle), which reportedly sold as fast as the company could produce them. Many Hampton rides continue to operate across the nation today with carnivals and at amusement parks. COURTESY HAMPTON AMUSEMENT CO.

One of the first attractions marketed by Hampton was the Kiddie Flyer Hand Car Ride.

"He was a copycat," Tinsley said of Sneed's hand car ride. "He copied **Vern Hodges' (Hodges Hand Car Co., of Indiana)** car and it got so we were selling them as fast as we could make them."

The difference in the two set-ups, Tinsley asserted, is that Hampton used a 12-inch track, compared to Hodges' 9-inch.

"Ours actually ran much better due to the wider track," Tinsley contended.

The company introduced its popular Tubs-O-Fun in 1953, touting its high capacity of 48 passengers, including adults. The new ride sold for \$2,750, according to ads in industry publications.

That same year Sneed moved his company to Portage des Sioux, Mo., about an hour away from downtown St. Louis.

"Ted was a boat enthusiast," Tinsley said of the company owner. "The first umbrella ride was actually a ground-mount boat ride (circa 1965). There were five boats on the ride and each boat would hold six kids. For years he just made the Tubs-O-Fun, boat ride and hand cars. The first trailer-mounted ride was 1968 and I recall it was either a single (file) motorcycle



or boat ride."

The popular Hampton Combo followed, which included a variety of vehicles such as a fire engine, motorcycles, dune buggies and a police car. Another ride made its debut around the same time called Space Age, with vehicles resembling something out of the Flash Gordon comic strip.

"I have two combos and a boat ride on my show," the carnival owner added. "They are well-made — the best. Ted never cheated on anything."

Of course, the popularity among young riders even today are the hallmark flashing lights and buzzers built into all of the Hampton umbrella rides.

Company sold

Sneed sold the company in 1978 to area businessmen **Jerry (Gerald) Ohlms** and **Ervin Davis**, owners of **E.J. Manufacturing**. Sneed died two years later.

Ohlms bought out Davis and hired **Charlie Dalton** to run the company along with Ohlms' son, Steve. The manufacturing remained in Portage de Sioux following the transition.

"We had some super years," Steve, now 54, told *Amusement Today* from a machine shop he

operates in Troy, Missouri. "We were building more than 60 rides a year during our peak back in the late '70s and early '80s."

"My dad and Charlie were great friends," he recalled. "I still have fond memories of those years."

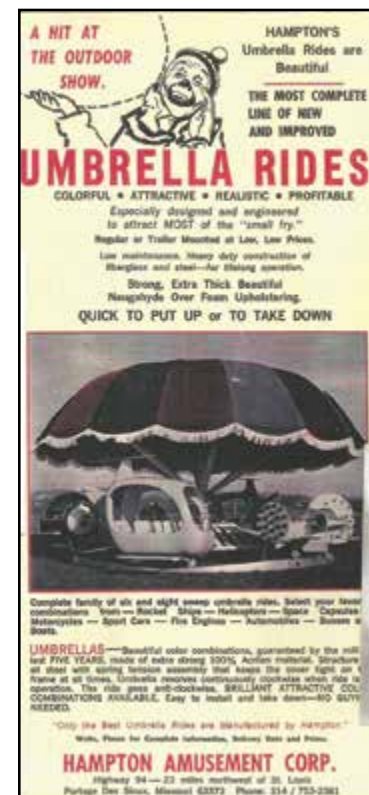
According to Steve, the company did as much as it could in-house, including manufacturing the wheels for the miniature vehicles.

"So all of the parts, with the exception of the lights and buzzers, were basically ours. We were the outlet for all of the parts needed for our rides," he said of the business strategy.

Charlie Dalton remained with the company until 1984, leaving to form **Dalton Kid Ride Rebuilders, Inc.**, in Foley, Missouri. He not only repaired existing equipment, but also started producing new rides based on the Hampton platforms.

Reflecting on the time after Dalton's departure, Steve Ohlms said, "It became more difficult to keep the business going in the late '80s and it was sold a couple of times, but ended up back in our hands."

According to Steve, the company was acquired in 1989 by Italian ride manufacturer **Zamperla** and it operated under



the name of **New Hampton Rides**.

"We had to put a stop on the deal in 1992 as it wasn't working out," he recalled. "We sold it again in '98 to **Archway Amusements** (Missouri carnival), but that didn't work out either."

Following the two failed attempts to sell the company, the Ohlms family decided not to put the operation on the block again. Steve moved all of the shop's machinery from Portage de Sioux to his **Farm Repair And Machine, LLC**, location in Troy in 2001.

His father passed away in 2008.

"Our family owns the Hampton trademark, but it's not a sales tool for me at this time," Steve asserted. "I keep busy with my partner making parts for virtually every tractor out there as well as work for **Kevin** (Charlie Dalton's son). I also do a lot of work — especially electronics — on other rides, and it's nice to see them come into our shop."

► See **HAMPTON**, page 46



The arsenal of Hampton rides under their popular umbrellas feature (from left) combos including a fire engine, bus, police car, dune buggy and motorcycles. The jumping motorcycle is one of the most thrilling rides offered. A young rider sports a big smile on a Hampton Dune Buggies. The main draw for small riders are the lights and buzzers offered, operators know they must keep them functioning to entertain the children. COURTESY HAMPTON AMUSEMENT CO.

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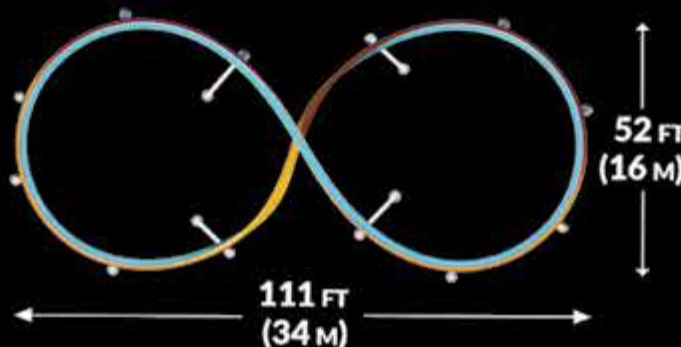
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►HAMPTON

Continued from page 44

Steve also has a 140-acre cattle ranch plus other farmland that he works throughout the year.

An amicable relationship

Today, Dalton Kid Rides Rebuilders continues to make new rides and refurbish others.

"When I was 15 years old I worked the summer for Richard Tinsley on his carnival and then came here and worked for my dad in his shop during free time and whatever," Kevin said of his background in the industry.

"We really got the company rolling, and dad died in May 1999," he added.

Since Charlie's passing, Kevin has been at the helm of the small manufacturing facility.

"We don't have much history to share," the 50-year-old company owner continued.

As far as the ride business, Kevin said: "I didn't have to reinvent the wheel, I've just tried to improve on it. These rides are bullet-proof."

It could be called an amicable relationship between Steve Ohlms and Kevin Dalton these days.

"I provide Kevin with a lot of electrical parts, axles, spindles, main hubs for bearings — a lot of machine work," Steve said of the supply chain that exists



Steve Ohlms

between the two operations.

With their shops only minutes from each other, the working relationship has seemed to work out great.

"I'm extremely busy," Steve said of his current business, while Dalton continues to build more than a dozen new rides a year.

"We still produce combos, jump motorcycles, quad runners and tractors," Kevin said of the current product line. In addition, Dalton is known throughout the amusement industry for fabrication of aluminum fencing and entrance gates.

"Richard Tinsley threw that idea (aluminum fence) at my father and we were the first to create portable aluminum fence," he added.

Most of Dalton's business is domestic with around 80 percent of it carnivals. Smaller

amusement parks, many of which are located in the East, are also good accounts. Dalton supplies parts for all Hampton rides, old and new.

One of the most popular innovations Kevin came up with was putting four skid-mount rides on one trailer.

"It's a good piece for me," he noted. "I've sold two rides to fit on a pup trailer and four on a big trailer."

Seven employees work in an 18,000-square-foot facility making (on average) 16 rides a year. The best year the company had was 2008 when it produced 22 new rides.

Lasting friendships

Reflecting on the business climate today, Kevin said, "I like that there is still great comradery in this industry. I was very fortunate that my father left a wonderful name."

Steve Ohlms was quick to agree, saying, "We had great customers and I still turkey hunt with some of them. These are lasting friendships."

As for anything on the drawing boards, Kevin would only say he has a "family-style" ride in mind for future development.

And by all indications, what goes around still comes around when it comes to the popularity of Hampton rides.



Two new umbrella rides, racked on one trailer, (above) can be dropped on location with the use of a forklift. A Quad Runner ride from Dalton is shown (below) during the Lee Regional Fair in Sanford, N.C., in September.

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RockStep Capital is working with the owners of Alabama-based **Hype Indoor Adventures** on converting spaces at two of its shopping malls — **The Janesville Mall** in Wisconsin and **The Bonita Lakes Mall** in Meridian, Mississippi — into activity centers. The possibilities include indoor climbing walls, zip lines, trampoline basketball, axe throwing and go-kart racing.

RockStep officials are planning to insert the indoor family entertainment and play center in the Janesville Mall's 100,000-square-foot former **Boston Store**. The company hopes to pair the project with the city of Janesville's proposed indoor sports complex for the space **JC Penney** formerly occupied.

Dave & Buster's is planning to bring its brand of entertainment to Lexington, Kentucky, in the form of a 30,500-square-foot restaurant, bar and family entertainment center. The new facility will be located in the **South Park** shopping center.

"This will be [Dave & Buster's] only location in Lexington. It's going to be a really nice development, and we're excited to be a part of it," said **Alexander Blieden**, leasing agent for South Park, which is owned by **Kaden Companies** in Louisville.

Dave & Buster's also has Kentucky locations in Florence and Louisville. The Louisville site opened earlier in 2019. The Lexington entertainment center will be across from two other entertainment centers — **Gat-titown** and **Malibu Jack's** — which opened in 2018.

Homestead Station held its grand opening on October 26. The Homestead, Florida, complex is the first major public-private retail partnership in the area.

Part of the historic downtown's revitalization effort, the complex's centerpiece is the **Showbiz Cinemas** family entertainment center. The FEC in-



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

cludes 10 theaters, 14 lanes of bowling, a café, a full bar, an arcade and prize redemption room. One theater is equipped with SDX, Superior Digital Experience, featuring a 70-foot wall-to-wall, ceiling-to-floor screen, oversized leather seating, surround sound and 4K projection.

Replay Arcades recently installed **Intercard** cashless management technology in its location in the **Plaza San Pedro Mall** in Mexicali, Mexico. With more than 80 games ranging from classics to the latest crane and redemption games, Replay management is pleased with the performance of its Intercard system and plans to install the same technology at future Replay Arcades locations.

Intercard's customer service reputation within the industry and its reputable product were listed as factors in Replay's decision to install the technology.

An empty big-box store in north Macon could soon become home to an **Urban Air** indoor park. According to a proposal to the Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission, developers are hoping to repurpose a former K-Mart into the entertainment center.

According to Urban Air's website, the Macon location is listed as "Coming Soon."

Plans submitted to the planning and zoning commission include indoor go-karts, laser tag and a large area for parties. Urban Air also features ropes courses, virtual reality, an indoor coaster, climbing walls, a tubes playground and dodgeball.

The proposal indicates Urban Air's hours of operation will depend on whether school is in session or not.

U.S. FEC operator **Apex Entertainment's** chain of locations currently stands at two, with a third opening later in 2019 and more set for 2020.

"We're staying busy, a lot of good, positive developments in the pipeline and we're looking to expand nationwide, so we're excited," stated **Joey Slawinski**, Apex Entertainment's director of operations.

"We're hard at work on our new Albany (New York) location opening soon, then we have another couple planned for next year," said Slawinski.

Albany will be Apex's third location, coming on the back of a 55,000-square-foot venue in Syracuse, New York, that opened in February and the company's inaugural 80,000-square-foot center and headquarters in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Apex Entertainment has been using **Embed's** integrated cashless business solutions since it opened its first location.

"I've worked in the industry for a while now and during that time, I've used Embed for several years, even before I started with Apex," continued Slawinski. "When [COO **Marcus Kemblowski**] and the team had our preliminary discussions of what the build was going to be like, we chose Embed."

Semnox has launched **Parafait Achievement 2.0**, aimed at driving engagement, encouraging repeat play and repeat visits through game playing and gamification. The technology leverages the concepts of point scoring, competition and rules of play. The solution involves the use of Parafait tap-to-play hardware and software integrated with traditional arcade games, eSports and virtual reality attractions.

"Location-based entertainment businesses are constantly thinking of ways to increase repeat visits at their venue. We are happy to see that Parafait Achievements is acting as an enabler to achieve this goal," said **Kiran Karanki**, director of Semnox.



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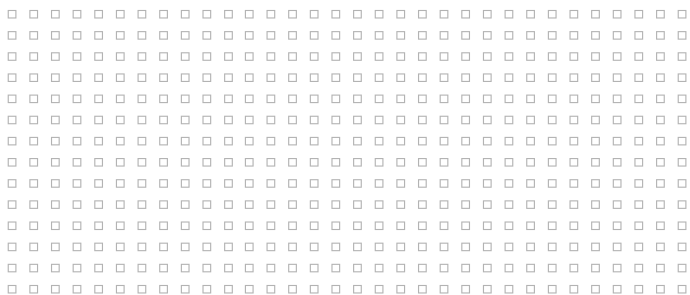
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Minnesota State Fair exceeds two million attendees, sets record

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota State Fair enjoyed mammoth crowds with more than two million fairgoers for the second straight year. Final attendance was 2,126,551 — a new overall attendance record. The previous record of 2,046,533 was set last year. There were six record-breaking attendance days, including a Labor Day record attendance of 184,740 and a Sunday attendance of 245,243. The weather certainly was not a deterrent to attendees.

"In terms of weather, we had moderate temperatures, sunny most days, low humidity and little rain. It really was a perfect weather outcome for 2019. Our fair guests enjoyed every minute of it," said Minnesota State Fair Spokesperson, Danielle Dullinger.

The fair, as in the past, operated with an independent midway. With a nearly even split of rides between the main midway (29) and Kidway (30); there were a total of 59 rides for attendees to choose from during the course of the 12-day Great Minnesota Get-Together event.

The 22 independents included: Alamo Amusements (6); Arnold Amusements (3); B-Thrilled Attractions (2); Del Rio Cristiani (1); D & K Amusements (2); Fair Ride Entertainment, LLC (4); Family Entertainment, (2); Fun Attractions, LLC (2); Gopher State Expositions, Inc. (4); International Attractions (3); Joyrides, Inc. (2); Laser Fair, Inc. (3); Lauther Amusements (2); M & C Attractions (1); Mr. Ed's Magical Midways, Inc. (2); Prime Pacific Entertainment, LLC (3); Reithoffer Shows, Inc. (Blue unit) (1); Rose's Rides, LLC (2); S. J. Entertainment (2); Skerbeck Entertainment Group, Inc. (4); Tinsley Amusements, Inc. (3); Wood Entertainment Company (3) and Michael F. Wood (2).

The three new rides to the midway were Zero Gravity (Battach Enterprises, LLC),



The independent midway was comprised of 22 different carnival operators bringing in 59 rides (30 Kidway and 29 Main Midway). The Sea Ray (below left) was new to the fair this year, brought in by Skerbeck Entertainment Group. Located on the north end is the 156 foot Lamberink Midway Sky Eye (below right). Provided by Michael Wood/Wade Shows and dubbed "The Great Big Wheel" during the Minnesota State Fair, the 36 enclosed gondola cars can hold six people.

COURTESY MINNESOTA STATE FAIR;STEFAN HINZ



Sea Ray (Mulligan) and Merry-Go-Round (Chance Rides) in the Kidway. The top three rides were Crazy Mouse Spinning Roller Coaster, Reverchon, S.J. Entertainment; Starship 3000 Wisdom Rides, Laser Fair, Inc. and New York New York Fun House Gosetto, S.r.l., Fair Ride Entertainment LLC. Total ride gross was \$4,385,156, up by \$394,134 or

just under a 10% increase.

New this year on the 322-acre property was the North End Event Center, a 12,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art exhibit hall that was the fair-time home to annually changing museum-quality exhibits that fair guests enjoyed for free with admission. Minnesota-based specialty merchants that made



their debut in the north end area included: Brim, featuring the Grilled Sota Sandwich; Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness; Good Things; Handsome Cycles; Homespun Gifts & Décor; Minnesota Distillers Guild and Summer Lakes Beverage. On top of that there were 31 new foods, five new food vendors, nearly 50 new merchan-

dise vendors, nearly 15,000 animals (including 189 baby newborns), along with an expanded redevelopment of the North End neighborhood.

Infrastructure improvements between fairs included replacing restrooms, repaving parking lots and expanding the fiber optic network.

► See MINNESOTA, page 54



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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Historic flooding of the Platte River during the **Nebraska State Fair**, Grand Island, cost the fair the better part of seven of the 11 operating days. Worst hit were the grass parking lots that sustained much of the rain. When the lots were closed, the fair had to develop a plan to get attendees shuttled in from as far away as Lincoln and Omaha. Typically the fair's shuttle service is comprised of six shuttle buses with six different spots in the region. This year it was increased to 23 vehicles and eight pickup/drop-off locations. When all was said and done, there was a 10% attendance drop and a 12% revenue drop over the 2018 fair due to the wet conditions. This made the fair board take out a \$1.5 million line of credit from **Five Points Bank** to shore up its short-term financial crunch. **Wade Shows** had 46 rides on the soggy midway.

Two fairs operating at the same time in Florence County, South Carolina, has generated confusion among area residents. Last year the **Eastern Carolina Agricultural Fair (ECA)** and the **Greater Pee Dee State Fair and Expo**, both in Florence, operated at different times. This year both had a similar schedule in early to mid-October.

The Greater Pee Dee State Fair and Expo last year operated only six of the 11 days scheduled due to a hurricane that severely hampered the operation around Labor Day. It was decided to move to a cooler and less volatile weather time in early October. The Pee Dee fair, in its second year, announced operating dates on Jan. 2, only to learn the other fair less than ten miles away on the east side of town had very similar dates. The ECA fair ran Aug. 18-25 in 2018. **Pat Lee**, director of the fairgrounds and the ECA fair said, "We are in our 69th year. It is always at this time [of the year]." Lee said she hoped the Pee Dee Fair would consider a move to a spring schedule.

"It is what it is," said **Hurbert Bullard**, general manager of the Pee Dee Fair. Bullard said he "would like to rectify" the scheduling of the fairs.

Amusements of America brought 35 rides to the 10-day Greater Pee Dee State Fair (Oct. 4-13) while **Primetime Amusements, LLC**, had 36 rides on the six-day Eastern Carolina Agricultural Fair midway (Oct. 8-13).

Beautiful weather and the alteration of the school calendar led to the **Maryland State Fair's** approximate 4.3% increase in attendance over last year with 591,000 guests and exhibitors.

"The cool weather almost every day of the fair and public schools opening after Labor Day increased our attendance and reduced the stress on our 4-H and FFA youth and Open Class livestock exhibitors, staff, and leadership who previously had to juggle schedules to participate in the Fair," said Maryland State Fair General Manager **Andy Cashman** in a release.

The 139th Maryland State Fair is scheduled for Aug. 27-Sept. 7, 2020.

Many fairs around the country have adopted a policy, including the **Georgia Carolina State Fair**, Augusta, this year. It implemented the rule that children 15 years old and younger are required to be accompanied by a parent to enter their fair. The Georgia Carolina State Fair gate staff asked for ID for proof of age. Anyone 15 and under was not admitted into the fair without parental supervision. In the past, parents had used the fair as a place to drop off their kids while they went elsewhere. In a **Fox 54, WFXG** interview, **Joe Taylor**, fair manager said in part, "We have had complaints about unattended teenagers, and when I say teenagers, I mean adolescents." He also said there have been various comments on the fair's Facebook page including, "Why haven't you done this before." **James E. Strates Shows** had the midway contract.

Kathy Kramer, CEO of the state-owned **Orange County Fair & Event Center**, Costa Mesa, California, is moving north to become president and CEO of the **Central Washington State Fair**, Yakima, beginning Feb. 1. Kramer will replace current President **Greg Stewart**, who retires at the end of this year.

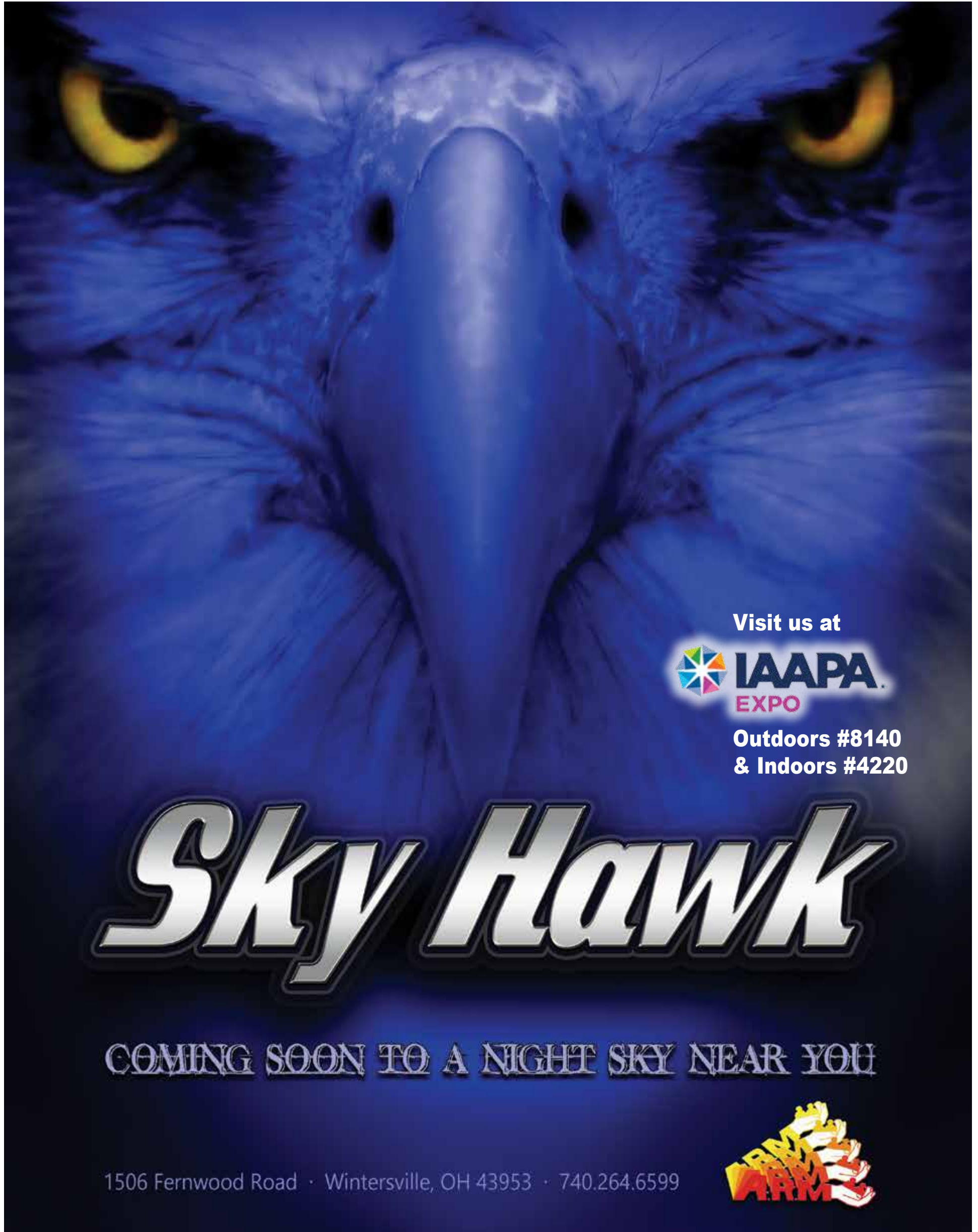
OC Fair & Event Center board Chairman **Robert Ruiz**, learned of the move, reading a press release from the other fair. Kramer has overseen five years of summer fairs in Orange County. The 2019 version, dubbed "Acres of Fun," drew nearly 1.4 million people. **Ray Cammack Shows** had the ride midway.

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The Giant Slide (above left) is one of the Minnesota State Fair’s most popular permanent attractions. Perfect weather was the key to the fair having six record-breaking attendance days, including Labor Day. New York, New York Fun House (above right), brought in by Fair Ride Entertainment, LLC, was one of the three top-grossing rides. COURTESY MINNESOTA STATE FAIR; STEFAN HINZ

►MINNESOTA
Continued from page 51

Some of the foods making their debut at the fair were Blueberry Key Lime Pie, Carolina Pit-Smoked Brisket Taco, Cheesy Sriracha Funnel Cake Bites, Cuban Fusion Fajita, Fried Tacos On-A-Stick, Lamb T-Bone Chops, Peaches n’ Cream Nachos, Shrimp & Grits Fritters, Turkish Pizza and Warm Cheesecake Tart.

Total grandstand attendance came in at 115,427 (not including MSF Amateur Talent Contest Finals). The six sold out shows included **Hootie & The Blowfish**; **Group Therapy** tour with special guest **Barenaked Ladies**; **Dierks Bentley** with special guest **Caylee Hammack**; “Weird Al” **Yankovic** Strings Attached Tour; **Daryl Hall & John Oates** with special guest **G. Love & Special Sauce**; **Lionel Richie** with special guest **Lauren Jauregui** and **The Current’s** **Music On-A-Stick** featuring **Brandi Carlile** with special guests **Mavis Staples** and **Savannah Conley**.

Prior to the fair there were numerous admission and ride saving promotions. During the fair there were promotions each day, including Thrifty Thursday; Seniors and Kids Day; Military Appreciation Day; and Kids & Last Chance Day.

Dullinger was quick to give kudos where they were due: “The Minnesota State Fair has great relationships with all the partners we work with from the ride providers to merchandise vendors to food vendors to media partners and others. We all work hard to put on the best fair experience year after year.”

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world, attracting more than two million visitors annually. Showcasing Minnesota’s finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is always 12 days of fun ending Labor Day. The 2020 fair takes place Aug. 27 – Sept. 7.

•mnstatefair.org





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Weather wreaked attendance havoc on 11-day Topsfield Fair

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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TOPSFIELD, Mass. – While final attendance figures were not available at press time, **Topsfield Fair** organizers feel it will be down quite a bit from the 2018 fair when 486,000 people attended, contributing to an 8% increase last year.

"We had a mixed weather year," said **David Thomson**, Topsfield Fair spokesperson. Both weekends of the fair had decent weather, however a Nor'easter was expected to hit Thursday, Oct. 10, through possibly that Sunday. "Due to the extreme forecast, the decision was made to close the midway on Thursday. We allowed guests to park and enter for free that day to visit the agricultural buildings," Thomson said. As it turned out, the weather was fine on that date but rainy and windy the next day, so many of the midway rides did not operate. By Saturday morning, the adverse weather had cleared out.

Fiesta Shows, from Seabrook, New Hampshire, had the ride midway again, bringing in 59 rides, of which 20 were kiddie ones. The new 28-meter **AMC Gondola Wheel** that was supposed to be a part of the fair was delayed. It will be coming for the 2020 fair. Top rides included **Super Cyclone Coaster**, (**Interpark**); **Giant Slide**, (**Pitroff**) and **Freakout** (**KMG**). "We expanded our toddler playground section to include interactive excavators where kids (and even some parents) could scoop, move and drop piles of rocks as if they were at a construction site," said **EJ Dean**, with the show. The midway has been a major part of the fair for 69 years when **Fiesta Shows** was first contracted to bring rides and entertainment to the Topsfield Fair.

The fair theme this year was "Centuries of Fun!"

A highlight of the fair was a record breaking giant pumpkin, grown by a Connecticut man. It weighed in at 2,194.5 pounds. This took place at the "Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off" event.

Special promotions included pre-fair discounted admission, food vouchers and ride tickets. These were available from the fair website and many local businesses. A three-day admission pass, good any three of the 11 days, was available for \$30.00 in advance. During the fair, there was a Senior Citizen Day with reduced admission, as well as free admission to active military personnel and their families on another day.

Some of the traditional favorites continued to be crowd pleasers, including: **Learned's Apple Pie**; **Whoopie Wagon** Whoopie

Pies; **Winfrey's Fudge**; **Anna's Fried Dough**, cider donuts and more. Also a food stand run by the **First Congregation Church of Topsfield** has been serving turkey dinners since before 1920.

New this year, the Topsfield Fair dedicated a specific day and time to make it easier for children and adults with autism and other sensory sensitivities to enjoy the fair. This step was taken because when members of a family have autism, sensory processing disorders, or other issues, attend-

ing large scale events, such as the fair, is often difficult. Many times it causes these families to be excluded from accessing these types of events. "Loud music, flashing lights, and large crowds can be extremely overwhelming and unmanageable to children and adults who have sensory difficulties," said Thomson.

When the day was first announced, **James O'Brien**, general manager said: "In an effort

▶ See TOPSFIELD, page 56



Fiesta Shows has been the midway provider since 1950. This year the show had 59 rides. COURTESY TOPSFIELD FAIR

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On the Midway: Amusements of America



Amusements of America played the Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, Fair in late September, offering 45 rides – 20 of which made up a separate kiddie area on another part of the grounds connected by the extra-long Sky Ride owned by Reithoffer Shows. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Key staff from Amusements of America who were on hand (from left): Anthony Lopez, ride supervisor; Dave Gonzalez, purchasing director/transportation supervisor; Kellie House, safety coordinator; Mark Gagne, office manager; Greg Inman, operations manager; and Keith Gillette, concessions manager. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



A partial view of the main midway, which is bordered by the town of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Rides were supplemented by ones from Bartlebaugh Amusements, SwikaS Amusements, LLC and Shamrock Shows & Amusements. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Attendees at the Topsfield Fair had a large selection of food from which to choose. COURTESY TOPSFIELD FAIR

►TOPSFIELD

Continued from page 55

to create more inclusive atmosphere so all families have better access to the agricultural resources the Topsfield Fair provides to the community, we are making modifications with these guests in mind. We hope this will make it possible for them to visit the fair."

"Our biggest challenge going into the fair was the threat of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, (EEE). Since a man living in another town north of Boston contracted EEE, the threat level was raised to high in the town of Topsfield and some surrounding towns. We sprayed the grounds

twice, cut the grass very short and removed standing water to do what we could to prevent mosquitos in the area. We also recommended that fair attendees take precautions and wear long sleeve shirts and long pants. As the weather cooled by the time the fair began everyone was wearing the appropriate clothing any way," said Thomson.

When asked about their experience with the carnival provider, Thomson said, "We have a fantastic relationship with Fiesta Shows, who has been supplying wholesome family fun in the Midway and Kiddie Land at the Topsfield Fair since 1950."

The 2020 fair occurs Oct. 2-12.

•topsfair.org

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Wisdom Rides going after park business with permanent rides

AT: Pam Sherborne
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MERINO, Colo. — Known primarily for manufacturing portable amusement rides since its creation in 1969, **Wisdom Rides of America** has now laid the groundwork to begin pushing sales of its rides into amusement parks.

This doesn't mean, however, that Wisdom has given up on its portable rides. Quite the contrary. It means the company is now able to offer its entire line of rides with stationary bases for permanent locations.

"We have seen quite a lot of interest in this," said **Bo Moody**, who has specialized in Asian market sales for Wisdom since the first of the year.

Moody said he had a discussion with **Jared Davis** at the end of 2018, after the announcement that **Victor Wisdom** was taking a step back from being head of Wisdom and named his nephew, Davis, as his successor.

"He was looking into the possibility of offering his portable rides as permanent rides," Moody said. "It was a way to expand his business."

So Moody began working with Wisdom at the first of the year, as did his son, **Jared Moody**. The son is now heading up domestic ride sales after **Jeff Miller** passed last April. Miller had held that position.

Bo Moody is a veteran rides salesman, after having worked for many years with **Chance Rides**. With Chance, he attended the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Asia Expo. This past summer he went to that show representing Wisdom.

"I have taken one trip back since then," Moody said. "I have another trip scheduled in December. I got some good serious leads. It usually takes about a year for that interest to turn into a ride sale."

Moody said while every one of Wisdom's rides can be converted from a trailer mount to a permanent ride, so far he has seen a lot of interest in the Y-Factor, Wisdom's newest ride.

"That ride generated the most interest at the Asia Expo 2019 because it is unique," he said.

Moody also saw interest in the company's Himalaya ride, Tornado, Avalanche, carousel, and kiddie rides like the Monster Truck.

"The park models will sell for less," Moody said. "It won't have the hydraulics, the trailer axles, and so forth."

He expects the park model rides to cost anywhere from

\$250,000 to \$750,000.

For the park models, Wisdom will supply all of the information park owners need to build the foundations as well as a supervisor that will oversee the construction of the ride and train the maintenance and the operator crews.

"The park will have to supply the local laborers," Moody said.

Wisdom will exhibit at IAAPA Expo 2019 taking place Nov. 18-22, Orlando, Florida.

•wisdomrides.com




Wisdom Rides of America, known for portable rides, is marketing its rides to parks and offering conversions from portable to permanent for all of its rides. COURTESY WISDOM RIDES

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ 40 years of Schlitterbahn — page 60 / Great Wolf Lodge opens in Arizona — page 62

Australia's Maze Sequoia Park transforms into Outback Splash

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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PERTH, Australia — Just in time for the summer season (down under), **Perth's Outback Splash** is set to open its new four-slide tower complex. Designed by **Polin Waterparks** of Turkey, the complex features two body slides and two raft slides, adding almost half a kilometer of waterslides to the park, including the fastest body slide in Western Australia.

The slides will run from a new six-story slide tower and were on track to make their debut on Nov. 20. According to **Paul Woodcock**, Outback Splash director, all the structural steel of the slide tower was completely assembled by August and all the fiberglass was onsite. He stated, "We will soon see the mammoth task of lifting and installing almost half a kilometer of fiberglass waterslides. We are working with the ongoing support of the **WA Health Department**, our safety specialists and a world-class international engineering team."

Woodcock added, "We are proud to expand our range of attractions here, which will increase the park's appeal for visitors of all ages."

The Wedgie, one of the tallest in all of Australia, will offer thrill-seekers an adrenaline-filled plunge with a near-vertical drop in an open tube. Single riders will achieve a speed of up to 47 mph as they plummet feet-first down the slide.

Gold Rush pays homage to Western Australia's mining history. Also for solo riders, this enclosed tube will take guests on their own "gold rush" as they careen at up to 38 mph through multiple twists and turns in a gold-colored translucent body slide.

Two people can experience Blackout together. Starting out



Outback Splash is going after the thrill-seeker market with a new slide complex from Polin. A colorful array of stripes awaits riders who challenge Blackout (far right).

COURTESY
OUTBACK SPLASH; POLIN

true to its name, the enclosed tube raft slide will begin with a pitch-black section, but then suddenly surprise riders with a dazzling display of colorful translucent stripes and other special lighting effects.

The fourth attraction is one of the more popular slides from the Polin catalogue — a Turbolance. Dubbed The Wall, it will be the first of its kind in Western Australia. Riders aboard a two-person raft will meander in an enclosed tube with special lighting effects similar to Blackout, but with slower acceleration. As the raft bursts into daylight, riders will suddenly plunge down a steep drop, only to be met by "the wall," where they climb almost 30 feet up a near-vertical open fiberglass section. Eventually

losing momentum, riders will experience weightlessness as the raft reverses direction. It then traverses back down the wall, pops over a speed bump and terminates into a splashy runoff.

Along with the enhancements to the property comes a new name. The water park formerly known as Outback Splash at the Maze was a part of **The Maze Sequoia Park**. The combined park will now be called **Perth's Outback Splash**. The entire complex features the expanded seasonal water park and several attractions that are open year-round such as mazes, miniature golf and a children's playground, as well as some unique animal encounters. The park, which opened in 1981,

originally gained attention with its 27,000-square-foot timber labyrinth and now includes a hedge maze, tractor tire maze, two brain-teaser mazes and, for the little ones, a tangle maze. Guests also have the opportunity to experience encounters with koalas, emus, kangaroos and wombats. The Splash Island waterslide playground made its debut in 2013 and three years later Octopus Bay Kids Splash Zone was added. On weekends and school holidays, the park also operates a 30-foot inflatable slide called The Plummet.

The four-slide addition is the first expansion aimed at thrill-seekers in their teens and twenties as the park is looking to expand its appeal to a

broader age-range audience. The park, located near the Swan Valley region, is hoping to capture more tourists from Perth, Western Australia's capital city and the fourth most populous city in the country. Swan Valley, noted for its fertile soil, has seen a recent expansion of tourism-based destinations such as numerous wineries, microbreweries, a chocolate factory, restaurants and cafes, as well as food festivals based on locally grown produce.

Completion of the NorthLink dual carriageway multi-lane highway later this year should shorten the drive time from central Perth to about 30 minutes.

•outbacksplash.com.au



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After 40 years, a new chapter is on the horizon for Schlitterbahn

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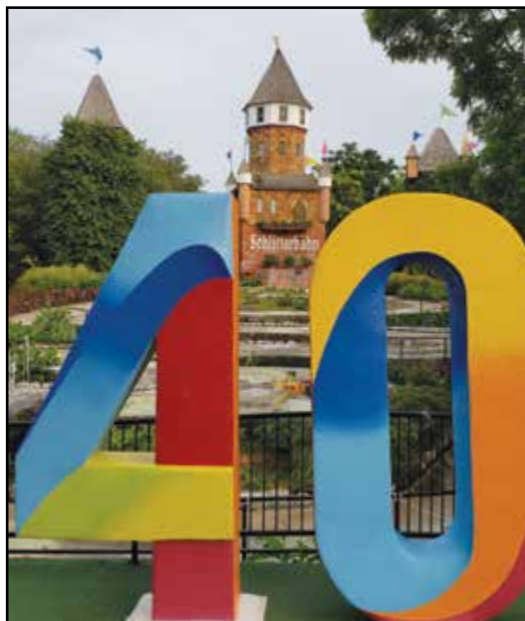
NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — Forty years ago, the Henry family opened a small water park on the banks of the Comal river in New Braunfels, Texas, a German settlement northeast of San Antonio. That unassuming start birthed what was to become the world-famous **Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort**. Over the years, the park has grown from a small four-slide attraction in a central Texas town few had heard of to a full-blown international phenomenon with a 22-year undefeated streak as the Golden Ticket Award recipient for Best Water Park in the world.

Founders **Bob and Billye Henry** moved their family of three young children, **Gary, Jana and Jeff**, to New Braunfels, Texas, in 1966 to take over **Camp Landa**. Leafing through a newspaper, Billye spotted an ad for the property — a modest 13-acre campground that sat next to the spring-fed Comal River. Frame cabins along with century-old cedar, oak and cypress trees were scattered throughout the property. “This is paradise,” Bob said, and he struck a deal to buy the Landa property that day. At the time, the camp centered around activities on the river: a rope swing, paddleboats and canoes. The Henrys moved into a house on the property and renamed the campground **Landa Resort**.

In 1967, Henry built the resort’s first waterslide: a green, 80-foot long fiberglass flume that was a straight shot down into the river. In 1971, Bob Henry, with the help of his son, Jeff, built a 100-foot long concrete tube chute. The chute was dug out by hand and the Henrys mixed and poured the concrete themselves. At the time, neither thought they were building a water park — these were just enhancements to the resort to attract more customers.

Gary Henry, the eldest child eventually attended the **University of Texas** and majored in accounting. Jana, the youngest, attended what was then **Southwest Texas State University**, graduating with a degree in fashion merchandising.

Jeff, the middle child, was not interested in a formal education. He knew early on in his life what he wanted to do and didn’t really see the need to attend college, but he did give it a try, lasting one week at Southwest Texas State University. Instead, he learned the basics from his father: accounting, engineering, design and construction. Having grown up on the river, he learned about water flow simply by watching it. He would stare at



In celebration of 40 years, Schlitterbahn erected a large “40” in front of its signature castle. Master Blaster, the world’s most acclaimed water coaster, brought worldwide attention to Schlitterbahn. COURTESY JAY JACOBS; AT/TIM BALDWIN



the river for hours coming up with ideas for new attractions at the resort.

In 1977, at the age of 22, Jeff Henry took a trip with a buddy to Orlando and visited two newly opened water parks: **Wet’n’Wild** and **Walt Disney World’s River Country**. Upon his return, he convinced the family to build a stand-alone water park to bring more attention to the resort. Bob acquired additional land next to the resort and built four fiberglass slides around a 60-foot-tall replica of the Bergfried Tower — the guard tower of the Solms Castle in Braunfels, Germany. In keeping with the German theme, the park was named Schlitterbahn, loosely translated as slippery road or slippery slopes. Schlitterbahn opened in 1979 and attracted 5,000 people that first year.

For the second season, Jeff Henry added Das Lagune, one of the largest pools in the state at more than 50,000 square feet. Feeding into the pool were a handful of small tube chutes as well as the Hillside Tube Chute, an innertube ride that, as the name implied, worked its way down a natural hillside.

Each year, the Henrys reinvested in the resort, adding accommodations, attractions and unique experiences. Jeff designed multiple tube chutes that spanned the property and behaved much like the river he had observed — offering light rapids, quick drops and back-water eddies. The longest tube chute, Raging River, could take up to 45 minutes to float from start to finish.

As the waterslide market continued to grow, the Henrys kept to what they knew best — tube chutes. To Jeff Henry, Schlitterbahn was not a water-slide park, it was a river park,

and most of the attractions reflected that philosophy. The park did add fiberglass body slides and other slides, but the tube chutes were the mainstay of the park, and because it is a river park, the tubes have remained black, looking like the old tire innertubes that tubers have used on the Comal and nearby Guadalupe and San Marcos rivers for decades.

That original section of the park draws its water straight from the Comal River. All the tube chutes use the crystal-clear water which bubbles out of the ground at the Comal Springs just a mile or two upstream. The water temperature is a constant 72-degrees Fahrenheit year-round and it remains untreated, pumped directly into the chutes. Eventually the resort with its waterways winding around and through the lodging grew to 65 acres using all of the land that was available in the river section, but that didn’t keep Schlitterbahn from growing.

The Henrys acquired an additional 25 acres of land just a little farther down the river. The problem was that **Prince Solms Public Park** sat between the two properties, and the city wasn’t giving up any of that land. Although the two nearest points of the two properties are just 1,500 feet from each other, getting from one park to the other involved a drive of about four blocks. The solution — trams, then later buses, and it continues to be that way today. Schlitterbahn owns a small fleet of transit buses to move guests between the two parks.

The new section, dubbed Surfenburg, opened in 1991, but unlike the traditional side of the park, Surfenburg was to feature cutting-edge technology. It was here that Schlitterbahn debuted

Boogie Bahn, the world’s first **FlowRider** surfing simulator. Surfenburg opened late, about a month after the rest of the resort had opened for the season, but by season’s end, attendance had increased nearly 25%. According to Jeff Henry, the FlowRider had paid for itself and the rest of Surfenburg in that first season alone.

Boogie Bahn was the result of a collaborative effort involving the Henry Family and **Thomas Lochtefeld**. In 1988, Lochtefeld had patented a device capable of forcing a stream of water over an inclined surface on which riders could surf. Lochtefeld needed a slick, soft foam coating for the ride surface so surfers would not be injured when they fell off the surfboard. Jeff Henry convinced the Henry family to help provide R&D for Lochtefeld’s idea. That first FlowRider introduced state-of-the-art water propulsion to the industry and changed water parks forever.

Using water propulsion once again, Lochtefeld and Jeff Henry incorporated the technology into a waterslide. A new patent for water injection technology was granted in 1993 and that same technology swept the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** best new products awards at the annual trade show, winning “Best New Major Ride,” “Best New Technology” and “Best Water Ride.” It was the first, and thus far, only new attraction to garner all three best new products awards. The water jets were capable of propelling tubes uphill, bringing an entirely new dimension to the tube chute. When Dragon Blaster, the world’s first uphill waterslide, made its debut 25 years ago, it gave Schlitterbahn guests even more reason to shut-

tle over to the detached section of the park.

Two years later, an even larger slide was built in yet another new section of the resort to the southeast of Surfenburg. Master Blaster stands 65 feet tall and features several large drops and multiple uphill sections. Master Blaster was, and still is, the centerpiece of Blastenhoff. Surrounding the Master Blaster slide was yet another invention of Henry’s — a Torrent River. Adapting technology originally developed for wave pools, Henry added wave making capabilities to the typical lazy river. The result was anything but typical, with giant waves pushing tubes and guests through the river channel. The Torrent River remains one of the more popular attractions in Blastenhoff.

By 2006, attendance at Schlitterbahn surpassed every other seasonal water park in the nation, making it the most visited seasonal water park in the U.S., a claim it still boasts today.

Following more than 20 years of operating the hugely successful water park in New Braunfels, the Henry family decided it was time for Schlitterbahn to spread its wings. Property was acquired on the barrier island beach resort community at the southern tip of Texas, South Padre Island. The coastal area, known for its beautiful beaches and abundance of water recreation activities, attracts more than one million visitors each year. **Schlitterbahn Beach** opened as a fully planned 25-acre water park in 2001. Multiple master blaster slides and a lazy river were all integrated to form a continuous Transportainment River System designed to guest time in the water and eliminate lines.

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Continued from page 60

The 25-acre property eventually expanded to include a restaurant and 221-room resort.

Shortly after opening its second water park, the Henry family began looking at a third location, this time in Galveston. A massive, 50,000-square-foot airplane hangar, constructed in 1943 and located next to Scholes airport, was to become the location of the first Schlitterbahn water park to feature an indoor section. Unfortunately, during the planning stages, a devastating fire in 2004 destroyed the structure. Schlitterbahn continued with its plans to build a park in that location, but the design had to be drastically changed. Without the hangar building to provide cover, Schlitterbahn constructed a 70,000-square-foot greenhouse-like enclosure. However, instead of using glass, poly-carbonite panels comprised the sides and translucent fabric formed a retractable roof. During the summer, the panels can be lowered and the roof retracted, transforming an indoor water park into an outdoor water park.

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island opened to the public in 2006 as the world's first convertible water park. A large outdoor section is open during the lengthy South Texas summer season, late April through mid-October. The indoor water park remains open through the Christmas and New Year's holidays and starts up again for weekends in March and the full week during spring break.

By this time, developers from around the country were regularly approaching the Henry family with proposals to build a Schlitterbahn Waterpark. One that caught their attention came from a developer in Kansas City, and for the first time Schlitterbahn took its water park concept outside of Texas to create **Schlitterbahn Vacation Village Waterpark Kansas City**. Original plans called for a \$750 million complex that included hotels and resort areas, retail outlets and residential homes. **EPR Properties** offered to loan the Henrys \$174.3 million, and the State of Kansas agreed to add an estimated \$200 million. However, the full plans never came to fruition. An economic downturn in 2008 forced Schlitterbahn to scale back plans. The investment in the Kansas City park was reduced to \$180 million and did not include lodging, retail or residential areas.

Schlitterbahn Kansas City held a soft opening in 2009, with its first full season in 2010. The park included more than a mile



By 1982, Schlitterbahn was already starting to take shape with the original four fiberglass slides off the replica of the Bergfried tower, Das Lagune, a bumper boat pool and multiple tube chutes. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

of interconnected waterways, including a Torrent River, Kristal River, Storm Blaster master blaster and a raging river tube chute. To obtain the funds from EPR, the Henrys used both the original New Braunfels park and Schlitterbahn Galveston as collateral.

Looking to expand again, Schlitterbahn acquired property in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 2012. Permit and construction delays pushed the opening of that park back to June 20, 2015. Once fully operational, **Schlitterbahn Corpus Christi** featured a full-service restaurant, Kristal river system and more than two miles of interconnected waterways and blaster waterslides. The construction delays were the start of financial problems for Schlitterbahn continued to exacerbate over the years. The family-owned company would never recover.

The Kansas City water park featured massive expanses of undeveloped areas. It needed something big in order to increase attendance and help it live up to the hype generated when the park was first announced. In 2011, the park added King Kaw Rapids. Designed to mimic the long tube chutes of the New Braunfels park, the chute wandered through acres of open, treeless land, which only served to highlight the lack of development. In October 2012, at IAAPA Expo in Orlando, Jeff Henry was being interviewed by the **Travel Channel** which asked if he had any major plans in the works. Much to the surprise of everyone — including the folks at Schlitterbahn — Henry suddenly announced that he would build the tallest and fastest waterslide in the world at the Kansas City park. Verrückt opened two years later in July 2014 and attracted national attention. Unfortunately, two years into operation, a

young boy was killed on the ride in a freak accident. Everyone at Schlitterbahn was devastated, but none so much as Jeff Henry, who went into a deep depression. Schlitterbahn eventually settled with the family, but the State of Kansas continued to place the blame on Schlitterbahn personnel and Jeff Henry, going so far as to file criminal indictments, all of which were eventually dismissed. The court cases took their toll, however, and Schlitterbahn Kansas City did not operate for the 2019 season.

In 2017, Texas was hit by Hurricane Harvey and all four Schlitterbahn parks within the state were impacted in some way. Schlitterbahn Corpus Christi was the hardest hit and the two-year old park, already in financial distress, lost some of its attractions. Among them, the recently opened **Hopkins Rides Shoot the Chute** ride that had been acquired from **Alabama Adventure** and reinstalled at the park.

In December 2017, the financially troubled Corpus Christi park staved off foreclosure for at least two months, but in 2018 **International Bank of**

Commerce took possession of Schlitterbahn Corpus Christi at a foreclosure auction. The bank contracted with Schlitterbahn to operate the park, keeping the same name.

After 40 years it was time for a new chapter. Unable to recover from the mounds of building debt, the Henry family divided the properties among the children. Gary and Jana received the original Schlitterbahn New Braunfels Waterpark and Resort along with Schlitterbahn Galveston Island. The two made the decision to sell the parks to **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** in a \$261 million deal. Part of the proceeds were immediately used to pay off the loans to EPR properties for the Schlitterbahn Kansas City park. Schlitterbahn Corpus Christi had already been lost to the bank and was rebranded as **Waves Resort** featuring Schlitterbahn Waterpark. Schlitterbahn Beach in South Padre park remains with Jeff Henry but will be changing its name for the 2020 season. (See story, page 64.) Cedar Fair had the option to purchase the Kansas City park by October

2019, but it did not exercise that option. The future of that park remains unknown.

Cedar Fair, which operates several world-class amusement parks and water parks, said in a statement that it remains committed to “retaining the valued hospitality, genuine spirit and heritage of the Schlitterbahn brand that guests have come to appreciate over the years.” Cedar Fair has announced plans to invest approximately \$20 million in both Schlitterbahn properties.

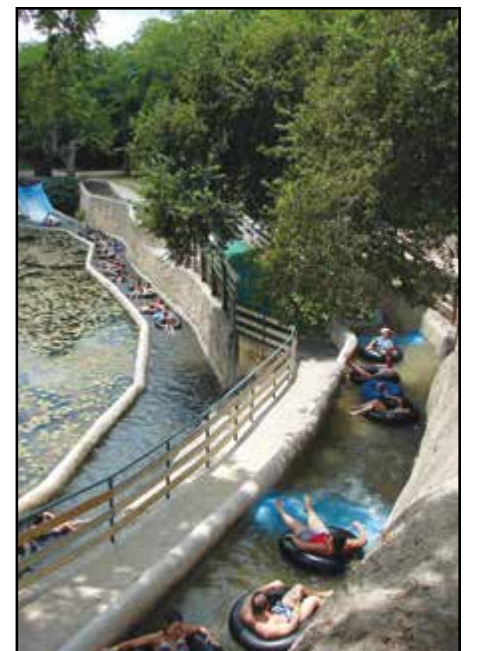
For Texans, Schlitterbahn has become an icon. People come year after year for vacation. Many who grew up with Schlitterbahn are now returning with families of their own. Despite its innovation and growth, Schlitterbahn never lost sight of main focus: providing a unique recreational experience that families can share together. It has always maintained its family-friendly policies of allowing guests to bring their own food and coolers and providing plenty of shady space for families to relax, unwind and spend time together.

Former COO **Terri Adams** started 40 years ago as the first employee hired by the Henry family. She told *AT*, “It’s been a lot of fun. I got to start in an industry that was brand new and got to work with a lot of great individuals and innovators within the industry. We worked on everything from safety to operation. It has been an amazing experience.”

In the 40 years since its founding, Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts has come a long way from its humble beginnings as a four-waterslide attraction for guests at Camp Landa. Eventually reaching five properties in two states, including two resorts, two indoor water parks, and five outdoor water parks, the family-owned company brought to the industry innovation after innovation and became recognized globally for its creativity, daring and ingenuity.



Dragon Blaster (above), the original master blaster water coaster, was constructed in 1994 in the northeast corner of the newly developed Surfenburg section of the park. Schlitterbahn's symbiosis with the Comal River is evident in this photo (right) of the River Tube chute and its lengthy stretch alongside the edge of the Comal. AT/GARY SLADE; TIM BADLWIN



Great Wolf debuts first indoor water park resort in Arizona

Featuring wet and dry fun, massive lodge is chain's 18th location

AT: Dean Lamanna
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SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — With a poolside splash and a dash of celebrity, **Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.**, celebrated the grand opening of **Great Wolf Lodge Arizona** in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's **Talking Stick Entertainment District** on Oct. 17.

Murray Hennessy, CEO of Great Wolf Resorts, was joined by three-time Olympic gold-medal gymnast **Gabby Douglas** for the official debut of the 350-suite facility — the first indoor water park resort in the state.

"We have been overwhelmed by the community's enthusiasm for this resort, and we are equally excited to open our doors and provide some howling good fun to families across the Southwest," Hennessy said. "Great Wolf Lodge Arizona is sure to be a favored staycation destination for families in the valley, with attractions, dining and entertainment offerings specifically designed to create treasured family moments."

The resort's 85,000-square-foot water park — available only to guests of the hotel — is climate controlled (air/water temperatures is kept at 84 and 82 degrees, respectively) and packs a variety of slides and water features for every age. It is complemented on the "dry side" by Great Wolf's 27,000-square-foot Adventure Park, which offers activities ranging from a ropes course to a bowling alley in an area open to the general public



Great Wolf Lodge Arizona officially opened Oct. 17. Olympian Gabby Douglas joined Great Wolf Resorts CEO Murray Hennessy and company character Wiley the Wolf to celebrate the occasion and kick off a fundraiser for Make-A-Wish. The star waterslide attraction, Diamondback Drop, was a hit with guests. COURTESY GREAT WOLF RESORTS, INC.

along with the property's restaurants and shops.

"With everything under one roof, family fun can be found in every corner — whether that's sinking a hole-in-one at mini golf, scaling new heights on the Howlers Peak ropes course, saving a pixie playing **MagiQuest** or enjoying a scoop at the state's only **Ben & Jerry's**," said **Brian Johnson**, general manager of the resort and its 18-acre site.

Ticket to slide

As the centerpiece of Great Wolf Lodge Arizona, the indoor water park features 13 dynamic and intertwining waterslides. **Diamondback Drop**, a **WhiteWater** Constrictor-Python Fusion model, is the star attraction — a four-person, high-speed raft ride is filled with serpentine curves and high-banked thrills that send riders into an overlapping 360-degree

coil before plunging into the belly of the snake.

Talking Stick Treehouse is the resort's signature, multilevel water play structure incorporating suspension bridges, spray stations and other elements, including five kid-friendly waterslides launching from various heights. Atop the structure sits a massive, 1,000-gallon tipping bucket that pours out every three or so minutes.

Additional water rides and attractions include **Crooked Creek**, a lazy river; **Slap Tail Pond**, a giant wave pool with swells reaching up to three feet high; **River Canyon Run**, a family raft ride; and **Wolf Tail**, with a trapdoor releasing the rider into a tube to experience a nearly vertical 20-foot free fall.

For toddlers, there is a dedicated zero-depth pool surrounded by age-appropriate slides and features. And for adults, there is an area set aside at the resort's large outdoor pool for relaxation and a break from the kids.

The Adventure Park houses several attractions, including, for climbing challenges, the **Rustic Ridge Rock Wall** and **Howlers Peak Ropes Course**. Guests can also explore an interactive mining experience and search for keepsake gemstones at **Oliver's Mining Co.**; bowl a strike at the four-lane **Ten Paw Alley**; challenge the family to a match at **Howl in One Mini Golf**; or explore a variety of games in the **Northern Lights Arcade**.

In the Grand Lobby, there are daily children's activities such as **Yoga Tails**, a fun and creative yoga class, and evening **Story Time** by the fireplace — a Great Wolf Lodge family tradition. Kids also can seek an opportunity to meet with their favorite Great Wolf Kids characters, including **Wiley the Wolf**, several times



daily. The lobby is also home to the **Northwoods Friends Show**, an innovative projection mapping presentation that transports children into the world of the Great Wolf Kids characters.

Eating, meeting, more

Great Wolf Lodge Arizona offers nine distinct dining experiences, ensuring guests will never be more than a few feet away from a hearty meal, snack or treat.

Options include **Barnwood**, featuring a locally inspired seasonal menu and craft cocktails in a rustic-themed setting; **Campfire Kitchen**, an interactive a la carte café for breakfast and dinner located inside the Adventure Park; and **Hungry as a Wolf**, serving up made-to-order handcrafted pizzas, wings, pastas and fresh salads. **Timbers** offers Southwest fare such as signature nachos, soups, salads and a la carte street tacos as well as margaritas on tap, Mexican beers, and specialty sweets such as churros and horchata.

The resort also houses a **Dunkin' Donuts** outlet.

For guests with food allergies, all kitchen facilities are peanut and tree nut free. The culinary team, led by Executive Chef **Grant Baker**, is practiced in accommodating those with common food allergies and dietary restrictions.

The resort additionally provides 12,000-plus square feet of flexible meeting and events space within six separate meeting areas accommodating 20 to 425 attendees. The meeting rooms feature built-in audio and video technology, customizable catering options and professional assistance.

The expanding Talking Stick Entertainment District encompasses 1.1 million square feet of retail, dining, hotels and attractions. Aside from Great Wolf Lodge and the nearby **Salt River Fields** stadium complex, which is the Major League Baseball spring-training base of the **Arizona Diamondbacks** and **Colorado Rockies**, the area is home to **OdySea Aquarium**, **Butterfly Wonderland**, **Topgolf**, **iFly Phoenix**, **Pangea Land of the Dinosaurs**, and **Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament**.

"The family-friendly environment fostered by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community makes Talking Stick the perfect location for a Great Wolf Lodge," Hennessy said. "We look forward to being a part of this community as it continues to grow into the Southwest's premier family destination."

During its opening weekend festivities, Great Wolf Lodge conducted a weekend-long "slide-a-thon" to benefit the global children's charity **Make-A-Wish**, which is headquartered in Phoenix. The resort donated \$20 every time a family took a trip down the **Diamondback Drop** slide and was expecting to raise about \$30,000 for the organization.

•greatwolf.com/arizona



The indoor water park (partly shown above) covers 85,000 square feet. Among the 13 waterslides guests can enjoy are the floor-dropping, high-speed ride Wolf Tail (left). COURTESY GREAT WOLF RESORTS, INC.



Open to the general public, the Adventure Park contains several family-friendly attractions and activities, including Howl in One Mini Golf and Howlers Peak Ropes Course. COURTESY GREAT WOLF RESORTS, INC.

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Princess Cruises adds play area

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida — **Princess Cruise Lines** appears to be heading into the water park/splashpad business. For years, Princess had been known to cater to a more mature crowd, and its ships lacked any type of onboard water park aside from pools and hot tubs. That has now changed with an upgrade to *Caribbean Princess*, which, as the name implies, was designed to cruise the warmer climate of the Caribbean.

At the start of the June 2019 cruise season, *Caribbean Princess* featured a new deck enhancement: an interactive, top-deck family splash zone called The Reef in the aft of the ship. The Reef is a water playground with a splash pool, assorted sprays and showers, and an interactive Winnie the Whale water feature. There is also an oversized game zone with giant Connect Four and Jenga for families to play. To engage the guests, Winnie rains down water from her fluke and sprays water from her spout. The ship is also part of the cruise line's **Animal Planet** endangered species program in the Camp Discovery Youth & Teen Centers, where kids can learn about the anatomy of humpback whales.

Built in 2003, *Caribbean Princess* is a modified Grand Class ship, and having been designed for southern cruises, was the only ship in that class without a sliding roof over the pool area. It was also the first to feature a \$1 million outdoor LED screen launching "Movies under the Stars," now one of the cruise line's signature features.

The ship underwent a massive refurbishment in 2017, adding dining venues and remodeled rooms, and was the first to feature Princess luxury beds, installing 3,000 of them. At that time, the ship started catering more toward families with the addition of more interconnecting cabins, refurbished clubs, and added kids club spaces with a discovery theme to tie in with Princess Cruises' Discovery at Sea program. Of the three new club spaces geared for the younger generation, the Treehouse caters to those age 3-7, the Lodge ages 8-12 and the Beach House for teens 13-17. The Princess Camp Discovery runs while ships are at port, allowing parents to leave their children in the care of the dedicated kids' club workers.

—Jeffrey Seifert



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Schlitterbahn rebrands as Beach Park at Isla Blanca

SOUTH PADRE, Texas — With the recent sale of the Schlitterbahn properties to **Cedar Fair**, **Schlitterbahn Beach** in South Padre, Texas, the only park to remain with a member of the **Henry** family has been rebranded as **Beach Park at Isla Blanca**. The water park is making use of the name of the adjacent Isla Blanca Park that is part of Cameron County Parks & Recreation at the southernmost tip of South Padre Island. Isla Blanca is known for having some of the finest sand beaches in Texas.

Management is stressing the fact that the famous indoor/outdoor water park is simply changing its name as a result of the sale of the New Braunfels and Galveston properties. The operators who have been with the park since the beginning will remain, and their commitment to the people who live in or come to

visit the Rio Grande Valley and South Padre Island is stronger than ever. The park will honor previously purchased tickets and season passes that bear the Schlitterbahn Beach name.

"We're committed to keeping everything folks love about the park over the years. And we are very excited to be stepping out on our own and launching a new chapter for the park," said **Mike Bigelow**, director of marketing. "We've already made a few changes, like lower prices on our 2020 season passes, and are continuing to work on more plans for next summer."

The conversion is expected to be complete by December. In the meantime, both new and old branding will be seen throughout the property.

Schlitterbahn Beach opened on South Padre Island in 2001. The indoor section was added in 2012.



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Visitors to the city pool in Nedarlands, Texas, were disappointed last year to see that the pool's lone slide had been removed before the pool opened for the 2019 season. Officials had determined that the middle framing where the stairs met the slide were no longer safe. Although the city wanted it replaced, funds were not available. However, in the middle of the summer, the city made money from selling land for a pipeline easement. That money has been allocated to a new slide, which means the city will not have to divert tax money from public safety or street improvements.

"The city has been fortunate to have these pipeline easement sales that allow us to do the capital projects and one-time purchases, so we're not utilizing them for operations but saving for capital projects," said City Manager **Chris Duque**.

Parks and Recreation Director **Angela Fanette** said she expects the new slide will be similar to the one removed and should be in place before the pool opens next summer.

Anderson, Indiana, has been wanting to improve its Athletic Park with the addition of a splash pad and water park-type features for several years. The park features a rare, 1925-patented, above-ground egg-shaped pool that was designed by engineer **Wesley Bintz**. At one time, 130 of Bintz's pools could be found in communities all across the country; now only eight remain. The Anderson pool was forced to close in 2007 when thieves stole all the copper tubing from the structure.

It appears that funding may finally be available. Several years ago, the city issued a bond for improvements to Shadyside Park. That bond is close to being retired. The proposal is to roll the bond over so it won't cost any additional tax dollars. That would give the city approximately \$2.2 million in revenue for improvements to Athletic Park as well as Shadyside and Mays Parks.

Immediate plans call for the construction of a splash pad and waterslides but do not include reopening the pool. However, several groups have expressed an interest in raising additional funds to reopen the pool. It has been listed as one of the 10 most endangered Hoosier Landmarks.

Great Wolf Resorts, Inc. is taking its act abroad by expanding into the U.K. In August, the company announced plans to develop a Great Wolf-themed water park and hotel in Chesterton and Bicester, England.

Although specific details have yet to be released, plans call for a four-story hotel with themed rooms, a 95,000-square-foot indoor water park and the usual Great Wolf amenities, such as an adventure park, mini golf, ropes course, climbing wall, bowling center, games arcade and **MagiQuest**.

Construction is expected to begin next year with a targeted completion of 2022.

The citizens of Henrico County, Virginia, will get a new aquatic facility in a shop-

ping mall. The \$18 million project will go into a previous **Macy's** store at the **Regency Square Mall**. The indoor aquatics center will feature an eight-lane, 50-meter pool and two three-lane, 25-yard pools, as well as spectator seating, locker rooms, a swim shop and other amenities.

The project is a private-public partnership between the county, **Northern Virginia (NOVA) Swimming** and Regency Square. Henrico County will contribute \$1.75 million over five years. In addition to a cash contribution, Regency will provide the building and will modify it to support the pools and related infrastructure. NOVA Swimming will construct and pay for the pools and will cover the facility's operating costs.

The Rebkee Co. and **Thalhimer Realty Partners**, owners of the Regency Square Mall, want to transform the 1975-built shopping mall by adding residential and other non-retail uses to the property. The former Macy's south building is being converted into a **Surge Trampoline Park**.

Macy's, which after acquiring both **Miller & Rhodes** and **Thalhimer's**, had two stores in the mall and closed both in 2016. **Sears** closed its store in 2017, and the lone large department store, **J.C. Penney**, plans to remain.

The plan is to turn the mall into an urban-like, walkable, mixed-use, family-friendly residential, shopping, entertainment, hospitality and active lifestyle community. The project is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2021.

Mall of America, Bloomington, Minnesota, is still working on plans for a massive indoor water park that would be attached to a 500- to 700-room hotel. The idea for a water park has been tossed around since at least 2004. In October 2017, Mall of America released a rendering of the proposed South Loop Waterpark showing a massive 250,000 square-foot facility that would be one of the largest in North America.

Plans for the hotel came to light when documents related to the water park were released in advance of a scheduled Nov. 7 meeting with City Council. The hotel, although proposed, is not yet part of the plans for which the mall is seeking to gain approval. The mall's owner, **Triple Five**, has indicated that several more hotels may be in the works.

With or without the hotels, the water park project appears to be nearing city approval. Triple Five was expected to present the final plans to the Bloomington Planning Commission at its Nov. 7 meeting, and the city council was expected to vote on those plans at its Nov. 18 and Dec. 3 meetings.

A complex financing arrangement has a nonprofit organization owning the water park on land owned by the mall, but leased to the city. Financing is to be provided by tax-exempt bonds which must be put up for vote this fall. If revenues at the water park are unable to cover payments on the bonds, the city can increase sales tax at the mall to make up for any shortages.

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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► S&S Worldwide's Tim Timco — page 70 / Legacy Entertainment launches multiple attractions — page 74

2019 WWA Symposium and Trade Show one of association's best

AT: Pam Sherborne

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ORLANDO, Fla. — Buzzwords like interactivity and customization frequently were heard this year on the trade show floor of the 39th Annual World Waterpark Association (WWA) Symposium and Trade Show, held Oct. 7-10 at the Walt Disney World Resort.

"Park owners want to customize the experience for their guests," said **Tony Hansen, Techni-Lux**, a design and supply firm. "They want interactivity."

Joel Schafer, Big Squirt, echoed Hansen's sentiments.

"Park owners are taking experiences and making them more interactive," Schafer said. "Games are becoming more interactive."

Schafer was exhibiting some new interactive possibilities for his Big Squirt product involving a fun use of new technology.

From exhibitors to attendees to WWA staff, the 2019 event was deemed a success. In fact, a report released by the WWA indicated this year's was one of the best. There were more than 1,800 owners, operators, developers, suppliers and designers on hand this year. They came from 23 countries and six continents to be a part of the experience.

In addition, the 2019 show welcomed more than 300 first-time attendees, many of whom have new water park devel-



More than 1,800 attended the WWA Symposium and Trade Show, including Water Odyssey (left). Above right; Andrew Mowatt celebrated his WWA Hall of Fame induction on the show floor in the WhiteWater booth. During the celebration, Mowatt got a hug from Geoff Chutter, president and CEO, Whitewater. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; PAM SHERBORNE

opment projects in the works around the world.

There were 380 booths on the WWA trade show floor representing 225 exhibiting companies spread out across 100,000 square feet of exhibit space. Exhibitors showcased their products and services, some brand new and some tried and true.

Exhibitors also boasted quite a bit of business going on throughout the show. **Pete Downs**, exhibiting products under **Shade Creations by Waterloo**, a division of **Waterloo Tent and Tarp Co.** was one of those.

"Yep," Downs said. "We have had a good show. We have gotten some business done."

Georg Dobler, Sunkid, a company which traditionally has about 150 projects a year just for conveyor systems, has been pleased with the company's push into the water park market. The company has been working on the Kasai Canoe Slalom, part of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Rick Root, WWA president, was very happy with the results of the 2019 Symposium and Trade Show.

"Working with a partner like Disney allowed us to deliver on all the things our attendees expect from us, but with even more 'magic,'" Root said. "We saw impressive attendance in our educational programs, in

the support from our sponsors and in the turnout to our fantastic networking events. Attendees traveled to Orlando, Florida, from parks large and small, public and private, indoor and outdoor, from all over the world."

Root said some of the 23 countries represented this year outside of the U.S. included Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Jamaica, Lebanon, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

"The WWA Show has al-

ways been the intersection for all things water park-related," said **Aleatha Ezra**, WWA director of park member development. "We were excited to see so many water park professionals from all over the world come together to learn and share challenges and successes in order to make the industry safer and more impactful in the lives of the guests we serve."

The educational events were very well attended, said Ezra. There were more than 100 water park professionals this year sharing their best ideas on the things that matter most to

► See WWA, page 69



There were 225 companies exhibiting at this year's WWA trade show, spanning more than 380 booths and 100,000 square feet of exhibit space. Pictured from left are Gary Patrick and Georg Dobler, Sunkid; Arielle Dworetzky and Brittlyn Miller, American Jewel; Joel Schafer and his daughter, Ona-Michelle Schafer, from Big Squirt; and Techni-Lux's Lisa Hansen, Alex Gonzalez, Steffie Murphy and Tony Hansen. AT/PAM SHERBORNE

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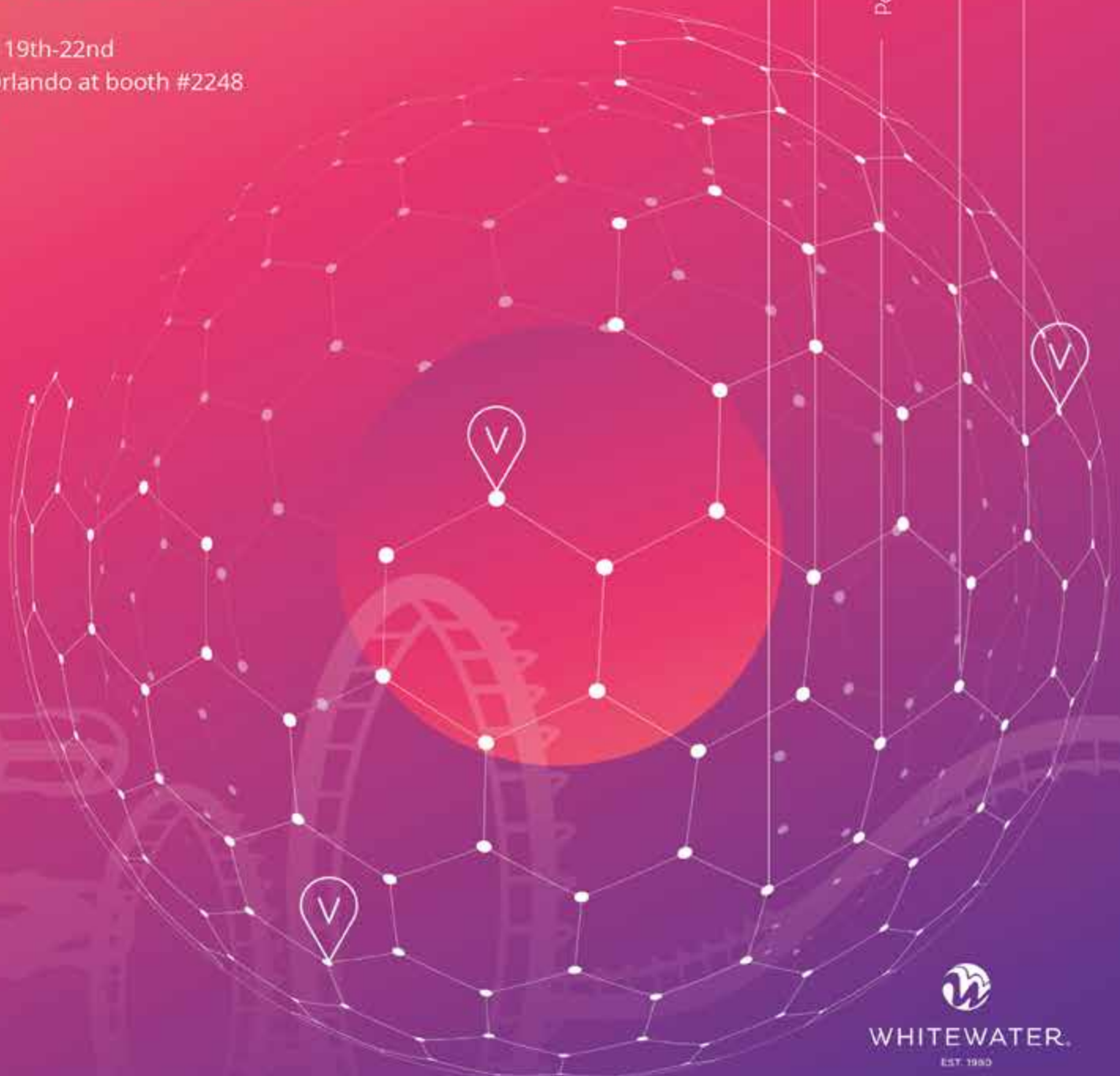
Rider verification: 5'5" and 130lbs

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Six Flags appoints Spanos as new president and CEO

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** announced that it has appointed **Mike Spanos** as president and Chief Executive Officer effective Nov. 18, and as a member of the Board of Directors. Spanos will relocate to the Dallas-Fort Worth area with his family.



Spanos

The company's announcement follows a thorough search process led by a special committee of the Board of Directors. **Jim Reid-Anderson**, Chairman, President and CEO, will resign as a director and an officer of the company effective Nov. 18, 2019. As of that date, **Richard Roedel**, who has served on the Board of Directors since Dec. 2010, will be appointed non-executive chairman of the board.

"I am thrilled to join the dedicated and talented employees of Six Flags," said Spanos. "It is a privilege to be able to lead such a superb organization."

"[Spanos] is a proven value creator and results-oriented leader, with a strong track-record in operationally intensive businesses both in North America and internationally," said **Jon Luther**, Six Flags independent lead director. "His strong strategic ability, marketplace intuition and people leadership skills make him ideal to lead Six Flags."

Spanos previously held commercial general management roles of increasing responsibility at **PepsiCo** since 1993, starting as a North American frontline manager.

Spanos most recently served as CEO of PepsiCo, Asia, Middle East and North Africa (AMENA). AMENA is a sector with \$6.0 billion in revenue that spans more than 43 countries with 20,000 direct and 115,000 indirect employees across food and franchise beverage operations, contributing \$1.2 billion in operating profit. Under his leadership, the company set a new strategic direction that accelerated top line and operating profit growth over multiple years.

Before joining PepsiCo, Mr. Spanos served in the **United States Marine Corps** from 1987 to 1993.

sixflags.com

Smoky Mountains become a mountain coaster hotbed

AT: Tim Baldwin
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GATLINBURG and PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — From time to time, certain towns, cities or regions become known for specific activities. Whether it be water parks, vineyards, etc., sometimes these mini Meccas emerge in a very short time. Currently, the Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge area of the Smoky Mountains has surged in the availability of mountain coaster experiences.

Weigand led the charge, opening the area's first in 2013. **Smoky Mountain Alpine Coaster** in Pigeon Forge was not only the first, but still boasts of having the longest length in the region. At just slightly under 4,000 feet, it was a noteworthy attraction.

Rick Christie, operations manager, said, "We can send a sled every eight to ten seconds. We are one of the longest downhill coasters in America. Families come in and take a ride, and the one thing I hear people say when they come off is 'This is one of the best rides around. We had so much fun.'"

"Day rides and night rides are two different kinds of experience," added **Karen Smith**, office manager. "In the daytime, you have the scenery, but at night you don't see where you're going, and it is a little spooky. It's exciting."

Christie noted that the operation is open daily year-round. "Sometimes I wonder how they come out and ride in the cold weather — but they do!" he said. "And they love it."

In periods of rain, the availability of rain shields on hand is a solution where they can be attached in a matter of seconds.

The following year, Gatlinburg opened its first, also supplied by Weigand. **Gatlinburg Mountain Coaster** makes claim of being the fastest



Brandauer's single-rail system, seen here at Anakeesta (above), gives a high-adrenaline experience. Gatlinburg Mountain Coaster supplied by Weigand (top right) claims to have the area's fastest track. One of Rocky Top Mountain Coaster's niches is its themed sets and props seen during the ride (immediate right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



in the Smoky Mountains. "We're talking about 35-40 mph," said **Angel Supernaw**. "Even with four [mountain coasters in Gatlinburg] the market supports it. We have a lot of people who are trying out all the amusements. For people who are looking for thrills ... most definitely. They do compare."

While daily operation is commonplace for this type of attraction, Supernaw explained that storms will cause the attraction to close as well as high winds.

"And bears! We've had a family of bears. We have cameras and we can hear them coming. Loud noises typically move them away. They are aware we are here, and they are not scared of us," Supernaw said with a laugh.

In 2015, two more coasters appeared. **Goats on the Roof** in Pigeon Forge offered a second Weigand coaster not far from the first. Down the road, **Ober Gatlinburg** brought a new player, ADG, into the competition.

"We wanted to have a safer option," said **Kate Barido**, director of marketing, Ober Gatlinburg. The ADG design has a blocking system. "It's a safety feature that will alert you if you are too close to someone or it can stop you."

"We purchased **Alpine Products** in 2014," said **Julie St. Louis**, ADG. "Our CEO is the owner of a ski mountain, and we wanted to get involved with other recreation attractions. We call this side of the business ADG Mountainside. In addition to our proprietary braking system, one of the safety features of our mountain coaster is if the rider takes off the seatbelt, it shuts the car down. We try to continue to improve the product."

Ober Gatlinburg is known as a ski resort, but the year-round options make for a steady tourism base.

"The mountain coaster is a great offering, particularly in a warm winter," said Barido. "It's a great source to generate revenue in a short amount of time. Surprisingly, 75 percent of our guests do not ski or snowboard in that peak season. The rest do ice skating, the ice bumper cars, the coaster and snow tubing. It's all low skill."

Apparently, the region had been bitten by the bug, as another installation arrived in 2017. **Rowdy Bear Mountain** opened its doors — and mountainside — in Gatlinburg giving the region five options and making the area a real destination for enthusiasts who appreciate this type of recreation.

The momentum didn't stop. Pigeon Forge opened its third Weigand installation in 2018. **Rocky Top Mountain Coaster**, just one mile from the famed **Dollywood**, carved its own niche — four lifts!

Mathew Whaley, manager, told *Amusement Today*, "It gives you four separate experiences as you come downhill. We have a lot of theming added. We have the hillbilly porch with a family of bears on it. We'll even have live bands playing on it in the summertime."

Mountain coasters tend to let the natural surroundings provide the views, but Rocky Top Mountain Coaster is excited to continue to expand the theming in their attraction. Much of the theming is done in-house. Among the storytelling offerings is an assortment of old farm equipment.

"One of our owners loves

that stuff," said Whaley.

Whaley points out that the storytelling works well with the long ride experience. A ride on Rocky Top Mountain Coaster takes nine and a half minutes.

The award-winning **Anakeesta** has shown remarkable growth since opening in 2017. Its mountain coaster offering in 2018 brought yet another supplier, one that is strikingly different.

Brandauer provides an alpine coaster that uses a single central rail instead of the standard pair of roller coaster rails. Its steepness is astonishing, and even the hardest roller coaster enthusiasts can attest that the experience is quite daring. At Anakeesta, the installation is called Rail Runner.

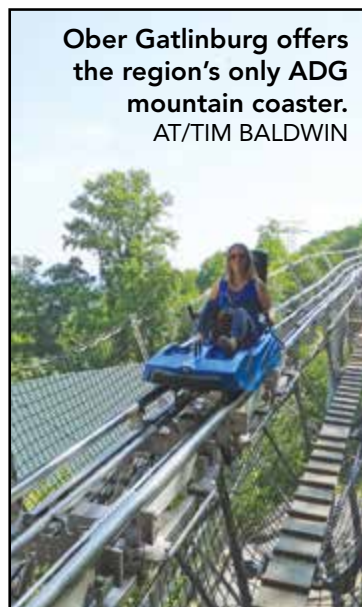
"You go approximately 25-30 mph," said **Erica Moore**, marketing specialist, Anakeesta. "Ours is unique in many ways, not just only that it is a Brandauer. Ours finishes with a 1,000-foot return to the top of the mountain instead of it ending at the bottom."

Either a chairlift or terrain vehicle transports guests to the Firefly Village at the top of the Anakeesta attraction.

"A lot of our guests tell us that on their first ride they used the brake, but once they got an understanding of what it does, they go full throttle on their second ride," said Moore. "They have a lot of fun going fast."

Merchandise and refreshments are expected additional revenue at all sites. As the popularity as these vacation attractions are, several of these stand-alone attractions continue to add more and more options and activities for guests to extend their length of stay.

Ober Gatlinburg offers the region's only ADG mountain coaster.
AT/TIM BALDWIN





VR ROUNDUP

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

The Void is filling a growing demand for premium out-of-home VR fun, announcing over the summer a three-year plan to more than double its present number of locations with 25 new outlets in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere. The Lindon, Utah-based company, which specializes in IP-driven immersive experiences inspired by popular film properties such as *The Avengers*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars* and *Wreck-It Ralph*, recently debuted its free-roaming, multiuser venues in Atlanta, Minneapolis, New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

Fueling the expansion is The Void's new partnership with global commercial real estate and shopping center company **Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield** and additional new strategic investment from **Lupa Systems**, a private investment holding company. Existing investors include **Cinemark**, **Fidelity Management and Research Company**, **Genting Malaysia**, **Meraas**, **Qualcomm Ventures**, **Shanda International Group**, **United Talent Agency**, **Verizon Ventures** and **The Walt Disney Co.**

Led by **David Sacks** of **Craft Ventures** and the **Andreessen Horowitz Cultural Leadership Fund**, **Sandbox VR** of San Francisco has announced a strategic round of funding from several famous-name Silicon Valley and Hollywood investors. They include **Orlando Bloom**, **Mike Ovitz**, **Katy Perry**, **Will Smith** and **Justin Timberlake**. The new funding of \$11 million brings the company's reported total funding to \$83 million for the year.

Founded by CEO **Steve Zhao**, **Sandbox VR** is known for technology combining full-body motion capture and VR — allowing players to become anyone and go anywhere together in the virtual space. It is in the midst of an expansive roll-out, with 16 locations planned by the end of next year; a location recently opened in Los Angeles, with others are coming to New York, Austin, San Diego, Chicago and Austin, Texas. This fall, the company partnered with **CBS Interactive** to launch *Star: Trek Discovery* — a nearly 30-minute VR experience for up to six players set in the world of the famous TV franchise — at its venues in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Free-roaming VR developer-operator **Tyffon, Inc.**, a graduate of **Disney Accelerator**, recently raised \$7.8 million in new financing to boost global expansion of its high-end, hyper-realistic **Tyffonium** venues, which offer horror and fantasy experiences. The investment represents the first tranche of the Santa Monica, California-based company's Series A financing and brings total investment to more than \$12 million to date. The latest financing round was led by **Tokyo Broadcasting System**; existing investors include **Sega Sammy Holdings**, **The Walt Disney Co.**, **Mizuho Capital**, **Tokyu Recreation** and **Canal Ventures**. Tyffon was planning to open a VR venue in Los Angeles and a third location in Tokyo by the end of this year.

Minority Media, the game studio and creator of *Chaos Jump*, a turnkey multiplayer VR platform, introduced *Reclaim!* — a competitive, multiplayer game set in a dystopian future where players fight for domination in battle arena maps across cities they are seeking to reclaim. The Montreal company's first VR esports title,

Reclaim! is available exclusively via the company's four-player *Chaos Jump* systems worldwide.

In June, **Minority Media** announced a distribution agreement with **Betson Enterprises** to expand the adoption of multiplayer VR attractions across the industry. Betson now offers installation and tier one support for **Minority Media's Chaos Jump** platform and is promoting the system to customers in the U.S. and Canada.

Boxblaster, a Miami-based start-up, has launched a four-player VR arena called *Minibox* with four custom games. The system is offered at \$45,000 — about half the cost of comparative VR solutions — and includes **HTC Vive Pro** Headsets, 2070 **Nvidia** graphic processors, full operational support and a commitment to deliver more than four new games annually. Additionally, the 225-square-foot turnkey arena features a customizable contemporary design. The company's first installation was at **Dezerland Park** in Miami.

Holovis and its shareholding partner, **KingJoy**, have opened a demonstration center in Shanghai. The five-floor venue features applications of **Holovis's** emerging technologies and complex immersive environments from their entertainment, enterprise and simulation sectors, as well as offices, innovation labs and development teams for both companies. Technologies **Holovis** and **KingJoy** are creating together include a **Holovis HVR** system and a free-roaming VR space where users wear the latest lightweight computer backpacks to explore virtual worlds and synthetic environments.

The facility, which is managed with the latest **Holovis HoloTrac** software and hardware systems, incorporates **Holovis Cave** — a five-sided environment with walls and surfaces featuring 3D volumetric projection that produces holographic-style 3D without the need for VR headsets. Users wear head-tracked glasses to view and interact with the environment and data, allowing them to work alongside their colleagues in the space.

Bandai Namco has opened a VR "theme park" in Tokyo called **Mazaria**. The attraction, located within the **Sunshine City** complex in Ikebukuro, features arcade games and anime as well as VR. The VR offerings deliver a mix of previously seen and new VR titles, including *Mario Kart Arcade GP VR*, *Dragon Quest VR*, *Dinosaur Survival Experience — Despair Jungle* and *Evangelion VR: The Throne of Souls Berserk*.

Vancouver-based **YDX Innovation Corp.**, specializing in VR, augmented reality and esports, has inked an agreement with **Launch Family Entertainment** to make its *Arkave VR* technology an official solution to be offered to **Launch Trampoline Park** franchisees. The family entertainment center brand features trampoline jump surfaces, ninja-style obstacle courses, climbing walls, laser tag, battle pit fun, bowling and more.

The two companies have agreed to install an *Arkave VR* arena at the Hartford, Connecticut, location, which is operated by **Launch** corporate. *Arkave VR* will be made available to more than 30 **Launch** locations currently operating and to another 30-plus venues in development. *Arkave VR* also will be included as a solution for **Paradox**, an attraction sub-brand created by **Launch** to offer electronic games and VR.

► WWA

Continued from page 66

other water park professionals. Some of those topics included safety, customer service excellence, top-line employee training, social media, marketing and many other nuts and bolts of the industry.

Some of the highlights from the educational program, according to Ezra, included "When Bad Things Happen To Good Operators," "Shattering Patterns: The Kartrite Resort and Indoor Waterpark," "The Ingredients That All Great Leaders Have," "Building Meaningful Relationships At Work," "Success Through Integrated Marketing," "Managing Your Online Reputation" and "Creative In-Service Ideas For Maximum Staff Engagement."

This year's Best Speaker award went to **Shawn Welch**, **Typhoon Texas Waterpark**.

In addition to the wide variety of breakout sessions and workshops, this year's WWA show offered two keynote addresses, both of which offered fresh new approaches to hiring and customer service. They were **Eric Chester**, **CSP**, **CPAE** and **Jessica Bound**, a customer experience consultant.

Of course, the educational highlights just made up a part of the abundance of highlights throughout the week.

During the event, the WWA recognizes many individuals within the industry. For example, there were four individuals inducted into the WWA Hall of Fame. They were **Glenn Davidson**, **Miral**; **Mark Hatchel**, **Kimley-Horn**; **Andrew Mowatt**, **WhiteWater** and **Vera Solis**, **Typhoon Texas Waterparks**.

The WWA board of directors recognized 29 exceptional

accomplishments by presenting the Board of Directors Awards. Some of those awards included the **Al Turner Memorial Commitment to Excellence Award** going to **John Gannon**, **Zoombezi Bay** at the **Columbus Zoo and Aquarium**; **Stephanie Hee-Johnston**, **NRH2O Family Water Park**, and **Mark Moore**, **Gulf Islands Waterpark**.

The Executive Board Award went to **Sandra Greiner**, **Sun Splash Family Waterpark** and **Tropical Islands Resort**.

The **Kelly Ogle Memorial Safety Award** went to **Clay Barnes**, **Specialty Insurance Group**, a division of **Everest Insurance** and **Dana Gage**, **LV Project**.

Leading Edge Awards also were given by the board of directors. A full list may be found on the WWA web site.

The popular **Wave Review Awards**, an industry marketing competition, were presented during the week as well. Multi-category winners included **Parrot Island Waterpark**, **Island H2O Live!**, and **Soaring Eagle Waterpark & Hotel**, among others. The WWA web site includes a full list of the winners.

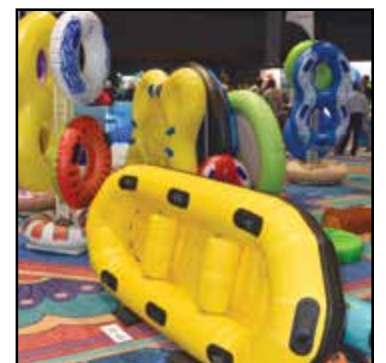
Highlights of this year's networking events included the WWA's Annual Golf Tournament, which drew close to 60 golfers at **Disney's Palm**. The Annual Reunion Party, hosted at **Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park**, welcomed more than 700 owners, operators, suppliers and developers. The **Island H2O Live!** party drew more than 500 show attendees.

The WWA's 40th anniversary show has been set for Oct. 6-9 in Las Vegas, Nevada. It will be headquartered at **Caesars Forum Conference Center** and **Harrah's Las Vegas**.

•waterparks.org



Aquatic Development Group (above) made its presence known during the trade show with a booth featuring space to meet with clients, both new and existing. Zebec had many of the company's popular rafts and tubes on display on the exhibit floor (right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



S&S's Tim Timco riding high with new installations, concept coaster

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

NORTH LOGAN, Utah — **Tim Timco** is riding high these days, and with just cause.

As president and CEO of **S&S Worldwide**, Timco has enjoyed an exciting year with S&S while opening three huge new domestic attractions.

During a recent interview with *Amusement Today*, the industry veteran discussed his journey through the business he has loved since his childhood days in central Pennsylvania.

"I'm originally from Elysburg — three miles from **Knoebels (Knoebels Amusement Resort)**," he said of his roots in the rolling hills of Northumberland County, about 70 miles north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. "I grew up knowing the entire Knoebel family and have watched it grow from a little kiddie park to what it is today — an amazing property."

While he still calls Elysburg home, Timco maintains a townhouse near the offices and manufacturing facility in Utah where S&S produces some of the most exciting rides in the industry.

"I spend two or three weeks a month in Logan and time working from home if not traveling somewhere in the world for S&S," Timco added.

New attractions

S&S Worldwide captured headlines nationally as well as from within the amusement park industry when it opened new attractions earlier this year at three large parks.

Most notable was the unveiling of **The Steel Curtain**, a mega-coaster at Kennywood in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh.

In a deal struck with the NFL's **Pittsburgh Steelers**, the coaster name emerged from the



Tim Timco

team's infamous defensive line of the 1970s.

"It's a record-breaking coaster," Timco acknowledged, pointing out the ride has nine inversions along its 4,000 feet of steel track.

"Up until then, most people didn't realize that we built large coasters as most of the previous projects were in Asia," the company executive explained.

Also opening in July was **Maxx Force** at **Six Flags Great America** in Gurnee, Illinois. The pneumatic-launch coaster roars to a record 78 mph in only 1.8 seconds and features the tallest double inversion of any roller coaster on the planet.

S&S also installed **Finnegan's Flyer** at **Busch Gardens**, Williamsburg, Va. The themed attraction is an S&S **Screamin' Swing** that soars 80 feet into the air.

"It has terrific theming and the first ride we have done with **SeaWorld Parks**," Timco noted. "The installation went very well and hopefully puts us in a nice position for future business with SeaWorld properties."

"We needed these high-profile projects here in the U.S.," he said of the new attractions. "Now people can see what S&S can do — we are not just a tower (ride) or smaller roller coaster-maker."

At National Ticket

"I always thought I was good at math, so in 1982 I took a position with **National Ticket Co.** [Paxinos, Pennsylvania] as an accounting clerk," Timco recalled of his start in the industry. "I really thought at the time that accounting would be my career."

Bill Alter, who was vice president of sales for the company during that era, approached Timco about transitioning into the sales department.

"Next thing I knew, I had opened my own sales office for National Ticket and grew the territory I was responsible for," Timco continued.

By 1999 he became director of sales and moved back to the company's headquarters. Within the next couple of years he was promoted to vice president of sales, became part of the executive management team and served on the company's board of directors.

Visionary

"I began to realize that much of the paper ticketing would become a thing of the past and tried to convince the company of that — saying it needed to broaden its market," Timco asserted. National Ticket didn't share his views and Timco opted to move on.

"I really took a leap of faith in 2008 and started my own business development company, offering services to foreign companies wishing to do business in the U.S.," he said of the transition.

In 2012, he was hired as an independent contractor for his services with S&S and was hired as a direct employee the following year. By 2014 Timco was promoted to vice president of sales for the company and named president in 2015. In September of 2016 Timco became president and CEO.

"I didn't know a lot about roller coasters when I took that first

position at S&S," Timco reflected. "But I hit it off with the CEO then, and things worked out well."

Since taking the helm at the company, Timco said business has almost tripled.

He attributes that success to the team of coworkers at S&S Worldwide.

"I've surrounded myself with terrific people, and now we are recognized as a major roller coaster manufacturer within the industry," he noted.

On the drawing boards

Timco tipped his hand a bit in saying S&S will introduce what it calls the **Axis Coaster** (see story, page 22) at this year's **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo** in Orlando in November.

"It will offer a unique set of elements not yet offered on any coaster that I'm aware of," he said. "It won't be the tallest, longest or fastest, but unique."

S&S also continues to provide support for former **Arrow Dynamics** rides, a manufacturer which built a large number of steel coasters and log flumes under a variety of names dating back to the 1940s. S&S acquired the Arrow assets in 2002, and today around 25 percent of the parts and service orders S&S receives are for Arrow rides.

Timco added that S&S refurbishes coaster trains produced by Arrow so they can continue to operate on rides worldwide.

Tariffs are hurting

Amusement park development has been thriving in China over the past several years, and U.S. ride manufacturers have played a vital role in providing reliable equipment to the new properties.

Commenting on the current trade war between the U.S. and China, Timco offered the follow-

ing: "It's had tremendous impact not only on us, but others in the industry. China was booming the last three to four years and now we have a number of projects either delayed or suspended because of the imposed tariffs. The same has happened with other U.S. manufacturers as well. Hopefully, both governments can work things out as we cannot survive without the Chinese economy and vice versa."

Like father, like daughter

Tim's daughter, **Melissa**, has also found her place working within the industry. She is currently the director of the amusement park division for **Baynum Painting, Inc.**, of Newport, Kentucky. The company specializes in painting solutions and industrial coatings for attractions.

"I'm so proud of her," Timco said. "She's a brilliant kid with a terrific head on her shoulders who made it through the industry on her own. She served as an IAAPA ambassador for two years, and when I opened the door she walked right through it — she's done everything on her own."

Timco has also served with IAAPA in a number of capacities, including serving on the board directors, chairing the manufacturers and suppliers committee for four years and a member of the executive and strategic planning committees.

Personal reflections

As for his overview of the industry he has come to love throughout the years, he sums it up this way:

"We're in a business to create fun and you meet great people doing the same thing — wonderful industry people all around the world. I'll cherish these relationships when looking back on them, and I'm very fortunate that it all worked out the way it has for me."



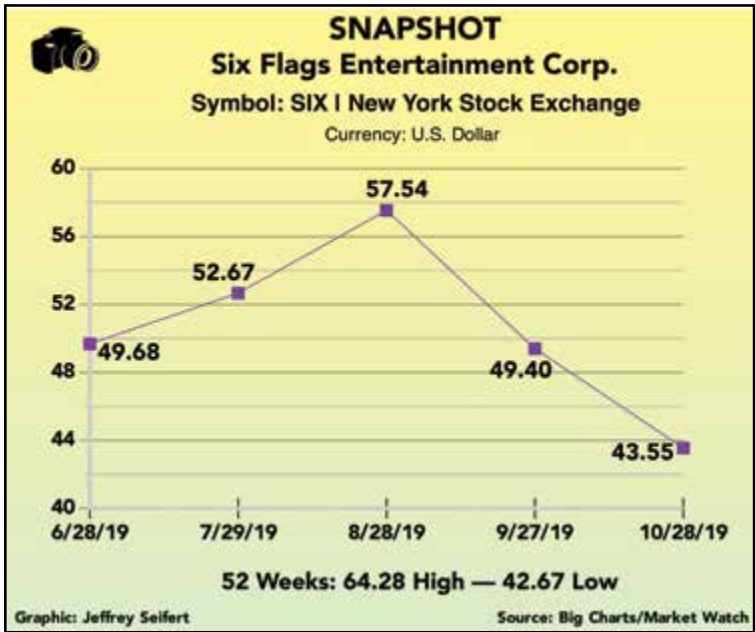
Tim Timco and Pete Barto at S&S Worldwide's IAAPA Europe exhibit booth, which celebrated the company's 2019 Golden Ticket Award for Best New Coaster (left). Tim and his daughter, Melissa Timco Bamford of Baynum Painting, take a ride on The Steel Curtain at Kennywood (middle). Two years after Timco become president and CEO, S&S Worldwide opened a new manufacturing and administrative facility. AT/GARY SLADE; COURTESY S&S WORLDWIDE

MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 10/28/19	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	52.79	55.17	26.88
Merlin Entertainments Group / Legoland	UK:MERL	LSE	454.80	460.70	307.10
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	56.57	64.86	45.58
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	45.44	47.27	32.61
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	130.53	147.15	100.35
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.21	0.38	0.17
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	78.29	80.75	62.75
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4335.00	4830.00	2855.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.90	1.86	0.85
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	9.03	9.12	5.45
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	28.55	31.68	21.61
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	13.98	14.46	9.84
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	112.20	131.04	89.48
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	955.00	2160.00	837.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	26.87	34.72	21.36
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	43.50	64.28	42.67
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	674.00	710.00	604.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	3.12	3.9	2.13

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange
—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal



DIESEL PRICES		
Region (U.S.)	As of 10/28/19	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.056	-\$0.290
Midwest	\$2.963	-\$0.347
Gulf Coast	\$2.806	-\$0.311
Mountain	\$3.082	-\$0.323
West Coast	\$3.379	-\$0.185
California	\$3.998	-\$0.076

CURRENCY	
On 10/28/19 \$1 USD =	
0.9022	EURO
0.7790	GBP (British Pound)
108.66	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9942	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4650	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3054	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cityneon, Round Room Live to tour 'Jurassic'

LAS VEGAS — International exhibition and attraction producer **Cityneon Holdings, Ltd.**, has partnered with New York-based global live entertainment company **Round Room Live** to tour “Jurassic World: The Exhibition” throughout the U.S. Previously stopping in Paris, Madrid, Seoul, Chicago and Philadelphia, the traveling attraction will rampage through additional major U.S. markets for two years after a new launch set for late 2020. Produced in conjunction with Cityneon subsidiary **Victory Hill Exhibitions** and **Universal Brand Development**, a division of **NBCUniversal**, “Jurassic World” is an immersive attraction incorporating life-sized prehistoric creatures such as the Brachiosaurus, Velociraptor and Tyrannosaurus Rex in addition to interactive educational elements.

Embed rolls with mobile wallet, new UAE FEC

SINGAPORE — Global FEC cashless business management system provider **Embed (IAAPA Expo booth #1336)** has become what it claims to be the only FEC cashless business solution offering a mobile wallet — a virtual game card that can be added to the Apple Wallet (on the IOS platform) and Google Pay (on the Android platform). Featuring the same functionality as a game card, the cloud-based technology enables guests to easily reload it without leaving the game. It also allows operators to drive return visits and track customer spending. In other company news, Embed’s solutions are being deployed at the recently opened **Zeal Entertainment Center** at the **Dalma Mall** in Abu Dhabi, UAE — a 35,000-square-foot facility offering VR attractions, arcade games and other activities.

MGM Resorts settles in mass shooting tragedy

LAS VEGAS — **MGM Resorts Intl.** has reached a settlement worth at least \$735 million with the surviving victims of the October 2017 mass shooting that killed 58 and injured as many as 700 during the **Route 91 Harvest** country music festival. “While nothing will be able to bring back the lives lost or undo the horrors so many suffered on that day, this settlement will provide fair compensation for thousands of victims and their families,” said **Robert Eglet**, a lead counsel representing some 2,500 plaintiffs, adding that the settlement “represents good corporate citizenship on [MGM Resorts’] part.” The gunman was a 64-year-old recluse who fired on an outdoor crowd of about 22,000 from the 32nd floor of MGM’s **Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino**. MGM said the settlement, which could grow to \$800 million if more claimants step forward, is not an admission of liability.

In brief...

- **Dreamland** amusement park in Margate, Kent, England, saw guest numbers surge this year— its busiest since reopening four years ago. The park welcomed 650,000-plus visitors, more than twice as many as any previous year, from the start of its primary 2019 season through Sept. 2. Management attributed the increase to improved food, entertainment and seasonal offerings as well as a new pay-per-ride policy. Dreamland turns 100 next year.
- **Picsolve**, an international provider of photo and video capture technology for attractions, has purchased Belgium-based events business start-up **Panora.me**. The collaboration has led to Picsolve Lab, which will drive the development of cutting-edge capture innovations to be integrated within Picsolve’s new digital platform.
- Dallas-based **US Assets, Inc.**, has acquired **TexPlex Park** and **Blaine Stone Lodge** in Midlothian, Texas. The deal enables the recreation company to accelerate its strategic growth plan to become the top name in powersports riding, off-road experiences and retail, including an expansion into sales of powersports ATVs, UTVs, dirt bikes, parts and accessories.

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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Charlotte van Etten, Vekoma Rides Manufacturing BV's sales and marketing and account manager for **Walt Disney World Resort**, began with Vekoma in 1998.

Established in 1926, the manufacturing company originally made farm equipment and later steel constructions for the coal mining industry. Since the 1970s, Vekoma has been making amusement rides.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), member, serving on various committees including the Service Award Committee
- ASTM, member involvement
- ISHL, member involvement

Charlotte van Etten read, listened and learned on the job

VLODROP, Netherlands — Charlotte van Etten has always liked fast rides, the roller coasters. Growing up in the southeastern portion of the Netherlands, she and her family frequented Efteling Theme Park in Kaatsheuvel for family vacations.

"The rides weren't as intense as they are now, but I loved them," she said. "I still do."

But had someone told van Etten back then she would one day work for a company that made those fast rides and those roller coasters, it is doubtful she would have believed it. In fact, she described her entrance into the amusement industry with Vekoma as more of a coincidence.

"My husband, Ton, and I had moved to the Orlando, Florida area," she said. "His dream was for many years to move to the U.S. and give his profession as physical therapy a new dimension. I followed and never had any regrets."

Van Etten helped her husband get his business up and running. Once things were going smoothly, she decided to go out and look around at the job market. She went to a temporary job agency. When the agency discovered she spoke Dutch and knew the dialect, they knew of a perfect fit. And that fit was with Vekoma.

Becoming involved with Vekoma in Orlando eventually led to van Etten taking over as account manager for Vekoma with the Walt Disney World account.

After two decades of working with Vekoma, she has no regrets there either.

"I know now what is involved (in the industry) and the beautiful thing is that the guests enjoying the parks, the rides and the experiences, only have a great time," van Etten said. "The best experience is that they just see the beauty of it all without thoughts about how it came to life. That is the strength of our industry. The results from our hard work

for a carefree day full of joy and smiles."

Van Etten was born and raised about 25 miles from Vekoma Rides Netherlands headquarters in Voldrop. Her father was an engineer working for Dutch State Mines and her mother worked at home.

She attended Tilburg College in the berg of Tilburg, Netherlands. Her first jobs out of college included those with marketing and management training.

She met her husband in the Netherlands. They were both excited when moving to the U.S.

After van Etten worked for Vekoma for a couple of years in Orlando, she was asked if she wanted to move back to the Netherlands and work at the company's headquarters. She did and ended up with dual addresses. She spent much time in Florida working the Disney account.

It has been the best of both worlds.

Van Etten admits that she "knew nothing at all" regarding the manufacturing side of Vekoma when she started. But that was when she began her learning path and she hasn't varied from that route: "Read, listen, learn."

"I grew into my job," she said. "I really did my training myself. I did everything I could to learn more and more."

She not only had to learn the industry quickly, she also had to jump right in the fire when handed the responsibility of creating and setting up Vekoma's booths at trade shows. But she was ready, willing and able.

"I knew the trade shows were important," she said. "It is just a great place to see a lot of people at one time."

Van Etten actively sought out committee opportunities with IAAPA.

"Being on some of these committees has been training within itself," she said. "It is amazing what you can learn this way."

Charlotte van Etten Sales and Marketing, Account Manager Vekoma Rides Manufacturing BV Vlodrop, Netherlands



Van Etten feels the future of the amusement park industry is very strong.

"I see a really good future for the industry as there is always a need to relax and have fun," she said. "People are getting busier and busier, have to absorb a tremendous amount of information through information technology, and from time to time, they just need to unwind and have a no-worry fun day at the park, pool or zoo."

Van Etten sees young people coming into the industry, and she is pleased to see so many of them are young women. Plus, she is pleased to see more women in prominent positions in the industry.

"Experience is extremely valuable and you see more and more women with higher educations, which plays an important role in this," she said. "What is interesting is that you see more women with a technical education both on the supplier and park side, which I see as a positive development."

But she still feels women have to work harder than men to achieve the same status. Advice she would like to give young women coming into the at-

tractions industry is: "Find out who you are, where your passion lies, whether it is the healthcare, technical or entertainment industry. Then research what the industry has to offer and needs, and select an education and job that fits your profile," she said. "Once in the industry, get involved in networks, committees and organizations and participate in those."

And don't be afraid to ask questions, she said.

"People in our industry are extremely willing to share their knowledge and experience," Van Etten said. "You have to go the additional miles but it pays off in the end."

Van Etten hasn't lost the thrill of the industry.

"It is fascinating to see what is involved and seeing the enthusiasm, and the dedication and knowledge of the people that work in this industry," she said. "Over the years many of those have become not only business relations, but also good friends."

"This is a great industry."

—Pam Sherborne

ON THE MOVE

The **Walt Disney Co.** has made major leadership changes in theme park operations on both U.S. coasts and in Paris.

Josh D'Amaro has been named president of **Walt Disney World Resort (WDW)** in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, replacing **George Kalogridis**, who has been promoted to president of segment development and enrichment for Disney and will lead the **Disney Institute**. As president of **Disneyland Resort** since March 2018, D'Amaro delivered record-setting results and oversaw the opening of *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*. In addition, he promoted a "cast-first" culture — making significant investments in everything from a free education program for hourly employees to a \$10 million child care assistance program for all cast members. D'Amaro previously held a senior vice president position at WDW overseeing marketing strategy, sales and business development, among other executive roles at the Central Florida resort.

**D'Amaro**

D'Amaro has been succeeded at Disneyland Resort by **Rebecca Campbell**, who brings to Anaheim 20-plus years of experience with the company. Campbell most recently served as president, Europe, Middle East and Africa, for Disney's direct-to-consumer and international segment. She will relocate from London back to Southern California, where she lived for eight years while president of the ABC-owned television station group.

**Campbell**

Michael Colglazier, a 30-plus-year Disney veteran who is president and managing director of **Disney Parks Intl.**, now oversees **Disneyland Paris** in addition to the company's parks and resorts in Asia. This and the aforementioned Disney leadership changes were set in motion by the departure in September of **Catherine Powell**, a 15-year company veteran whose two-year-old position as president of **Disney Parks West** has been eliminated.

**Colglazier**

In formally announcing its film and TV division, which opened at the beginning of this year, London-based creative experience company **Scruffy Dog Global Creative Services** also announced the hiring of **Mark Hackett**, who launched it. As the division's development director, Hackett brings a wealth of related experience and knowledge, having spent more than 10 years at **Pinewood Studios** as U.K. sales director before being appointed as 3D and creative director for **Pinewood Creative**. Since joining Scruffy Dog, Hackett has already secured work for the company through film and TV projects at **HBO** and **Netflix**.

**Hackett**

Josh Hays has joined **S&S Worldwide** of Logan, Utah, as executive director of sales and marketing. Entering the attractions industry five years ago as director of sales for **Setpoint** and **JR Automation Setpoint**, Hays was already familiar with the business — having been raised around it by his father, **Larry Hays**, who has sold amusements for 30-plus years. He brings with him an in-depth knowledge of sales operations and strategies as well as a B.A. from the **University of Utah** and an MBA from **Westminster College**.

**Hays**

Hersheypark in Hershey, Pennsylvania, recently announced a promotion and a new hire.

Laura Woodburn Krolczyk, a member of the **Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Co.** team since 1996, was recently named assistant general manager of the park. Krolczyk has helped Hersheypark secure and maintain its reputation as one of the industry's most noteworthy parks for safety and training programs. The various roles she has held at the company include director of guest services and ticketing, director of entertainment and director of ride operations. She most recently held the position of managing director of attractions and the employee and guest experience. Krolczyk will work closely with

**Krolczyk**

the park's maintenance team as it grows and evolves with the 2020 opening of its expansive Hershey's ChocolateTown section.

Anthony "Tony" Rossi has joined the park as director of rides, attractions and equipment maintenance. He is responsible for the strategic leadership of the rides, attractions and equipment maintenance functions for the entertainment complex, ensuring regulatory compliance and maximizing guest safety and satisfaction. Rossi has almost three decades of experience in the amusement industry overseeing ride installation, maintenance and inspection. He is active in safety education through the **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials**, for which he currently serves as secretary.

**Rossi**

Meow Wolf cofounder **Vince Kadlubek** has decided to step down as CEO of the Santa Fe, New Mexico-based multimedia arts collective-turned-attractions industry and cultural force. Three executives will share the CEO role: **Ali Rubinstein**, currently chief creative officer; **Carl Christensen**, currently CFO; and **Jim Ward**, currently chief of content. In a mid-October blog post, Kadlubek said he wanted to leave the CEO job "to focus on developing a new toolset of skills, to build key development initiatives and take care of my personal health." Meow Wolf opened in the former **Silva Lanes** in 2016 with backing from media powerhouse **George R.R. Martin**, best known for his *Game of Thrones* books and HBO series; its **House of Eternal Return** interactive exhibit / walkthrough had drawn a million visitors by July 2018. A multi-investor cash infusion of \$158 million this past May has turned Meow Wolf into an innovative industry player, with projects in Las Vegas, Denver, Phoenix and Washington, D.C., either already opened or coming soon.

**Kadlubek**

Candi Kelley has joined Fort Worth-based **TrainerTainment** as director of training. In addition to supervising the development of all trainers for amusement industry and other business sector clients, she is in charge of developing online training and shared-services mentoring programs to make the company's services available to a larger audience. Prior to joining TrainerTainment, Kelley was director of training and operations for the **Monkey Joe's** chain of children's amusement centers, where she worked with multiple locations to develop a sales and business culture while strategically improving operations and building the brand. Monkey Joe's grew from six to 65 stores, with brand revenue topping \$20 million, during her decade-long tenure.

**Kelley****Morgan's Wonderland founder honored**

Gordon Hartman, founder of **The Gordon Hartman Family Foundation** and **Morgan's Wonderland** in San Antonio, Texas, has received the **Governor's Trophy** — a lifetime honor — from the **Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities**. Hartman and his wife, **Maggie**, draw inspiration for their special needs initiatives from their daughter, **Morgan**, 26. (Pictured, from left: Morgan, Gordon and Maggie.) COURTESY MORGAN'S WONDERLAND

OBITUARIES**William Evans, owner, West Point Park in Pa.**

RICHLANDTOWN, Pa.— William Davis Evans, a former park operator, passed away Sept. 21. He was 91.

Born in 1928, Evans grew up in Clifton, New Jersey — raised by parents who had adopted him. Near the end of World War II, he lied about his age to gain enlistment in the U.S. Navy, serving aboard the *USS Wisconsin*.

**Evans**

After graduating college in 1951, he married Madeliene Ann Booz and settled in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, raising three sons.

In 1953, Evans leased Forest Park in Chalfont and later purchased West Point Park in Upper Gwynedd Township. While abandoning Forest Park in 1964, Evans refocused on West Point Park — boosting its popularity with country music concerts. Increasing costs and regulations led to the park's closure in 1989.

Evans was a past president of the Pennsylvania Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a grandson.

Spurgeon Richardson, Six Flags Over Georgia

ATLANTA — Spurgeon Richardson, Jr., a former president of Six Flags Over Georgia and past chair of IAAPA, died Oct. 18. He was 78.

Richardson was born in 1941 in Edison, Ga. After graduating high school, where his activities included team sports and serving as editor of the school newspaper, he attended the University of Georgia, earning a bachelor's degree in political science and education.

**Richardson**

In 1967, Richardson joined Six Flags Over Georgia public relations. He was promoted to marketing director and eventually to park president and general manager — a role he held for most of his 25 years with Six Flags. In 1991, he was named president and CEO of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau and remained there for 17 years.

Richardson is survived by his wife, Mary Frances; three children; eight grandchildren; and a brother.

Legacy Entertainment pushes the themed-attraction envelope

Inventive design firm finds fertile ground in Asia and beyond

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

LOS ANGELES — **Legacy Entertainment**, true to its name, has been leaving its mark around the globe for nearly two decades. Since 2002, the award-winning design firm has delivered thrills through 40-plus immersive attractions such as *Monster Mansion* at *Six Flags Over Georgia* and elaborately themed indoor and outdoor parks and destinations, including *Trans Studio Makassar* in Indonesia, multiple ride projects at *Lotte World* in South Korea, and the sprawling *Studio City Macau* and *Galaxy Macau* resorts in China.

Now, with several major projects completed in 2019, it is wrapping one of its busiest years ever.

The North Hollywood-based company, previously known as **Gary Goddard Entertainment** and **Goddard Group**, rebranded two years ago and named then 14-year company veteran **Taylor Jeffs** president and chief creative officer. Rounding out the management team are **Barry Kemper**, COO and director of production; **Marcus King**, chief projects officer; and **Eric Carnagey**, managing director, global business development and media.

In an interview with *Amusement Today*, Jeffs acknowledged that Legacy is still “kind of carving out our space” in the market as it moves forward under its new name.

“We’re a boutique firm, which gives us the flexibility to take on projects that are exciting and interesting, and decline others that aren’t,” said the executive. “We’re known for mega-projects but actually like doing smaller things, as well. If someone came to us with a project involving a little retail cart and it sounded

really different, challenging and fun, we’d take it on. If we’re going to commit ourselves to anything it needs to be groundbreaking.”

Having long shared a neighborhood with some of the world’s biggest movie studios, the company, which has just 25 full-time employees, has adopted an adventurous, yet practical, film production-type approach to its work.

“We build teams based on the projects we’re doing, and at any given time we’ll have 100 or more people working for us,” explained Jeffs. “For example, we’re doing animal and a marine life parks for a group in China, so we’ll bring in life-support systems people, acrylic design people. If we’re doing a casino, we bring in gaming people. It wouldn’t make sense to have specialists like these on staff full time, but they are absolutely critical.”

In addition to maintaining flexibility, Legacy limits its capacity in order to uphold high standards.

“Because we’re not a big company, we take on only three or four projects at a time. But you can only plan so well and can’t control when clients want to start, stop or pause their projects. Sometimes you’ll have seven of them happening simultaneously. Keeping all the plates spinning is a challenge.”

Evolving attractions

Legacy met that challenge this year, seeing several dark rides and theme parks to completion while designing about half a dozen other projects that are in different stages of development.

The dark rides, *Road Rage* at *Trans Studio Bali* and *Pacific Rim: Shatterdome Strike* at *Trans Studio Cibubur*, are located in indoor, multi-floor retail / FEC-type facilities in Indonesia. “For each, we had to figure out something that would make them really stand out, some kind of new territory to chart,” said Jeffs.



Legacy Entertainment has been honored for its design of the year-old Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park in China. The project was a labor of love for the company’s leaders (above, lower left, from left): Eric Carnagey, managing director, global business development and media; Barry Kemper, COO and director of production; Marcus King, chief projects officer; and Taylor Jeffs, president and chief creative officer. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

The company derived twists on both concepts from the walkthrough attraction genre.

Billed as the “world’s first stunt show dark ride,” *Road Rage*, tentatively set to open in December, taps Indonesia’s inexpensive labor market — integrating live performers into the rolling 3D film experience instead of pricey audio-animatronics. It also incorporates a dynamic ride system from **Oceaneering**.

For the giant robot battle-themed *Pacific Rim* ride, a collaboration with **Legendary Pictures** and **Lay-Carnagey Entertainment** described as the “world’s first immersive theater dark ride,” the value-added twist involves a staged breakdown of the ride vehicle about halfway through. This requires passengers to disembark and make their own way through an interactive stretch before reboarding to complete the 20-minute journey.

Citing **Universal Studios Hollywood**’s permanently operating *The Walking Dead* Attraction as well as seasonal park haunt experiences, where in performers repeat the same gags at 15-to-20-second intervals, Jeffs wondered aloud why similar live elements have not been deployed in regular attractions more frequently.

“Why is there this double standard between haunts and theme park rides? If anything, our rides have much less frequent dispatches than haunts do — like every 43 seconds. Adding live gags to them became a way for us to make the experience more effective.”

Jeffs characterized Legacy’s partnership with the *Trans Studio* properties and their parent company, **CT Corp.**, as “fantastic, because the chairman is all about groundbreaking, shock-



ing, wild ideas. Everything we do with them, they expect us to come back with something crazy, which is unique for Asia. Often, they want what’s been done in the U.S. already.”

Innovation, in fact, defines the entire *Trans Studio* Bali venue.

“We’re calling it the world’s first social media theme park because everything in it is designed to be seen and shared through your smartphone,” said Jeffs. “And they’re all tangible experiences — there’s no VR or augmented reality.”

Making the facility and its attractions social media friendly also exemplifies the need for the attractions industry to “look outside of itself,” observed Jeffs.

“If you’re only looking inward, that’s not how you evolve. And if an industry is insular and only relies upon itself for inspiration, it’s going to stagnate and die. We always try to keep our fingers on the pulse of what’s happening with the latest and greatest trends outside of our industry.”

Cross-cultural synergy

While Legacy has enjoyed much of its success in Asia, where it has opened more than

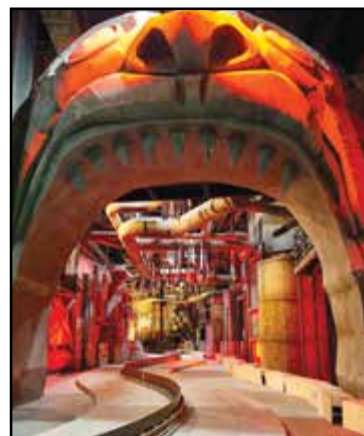
20 projects in the last decade, the debut of **Shanghai Disneyland** in 2016 has revealed a more sophisticated customer base and ever-greater industry potential.

“It’s the best thing that could possibly have happened to China and Asia for the theme park market,” said Jeffs. “Not only does it set a standard for everyone else to aspire to, it shows how successful a theme park in China can be.”

“We’ve been going to China once a month for face-to-face meetings since 2006, and we would always get lectured by potential clients about the way the Chinese think and operate. They’d say, ‘The Chinese people don’t like to walk. They won’t eat in a theme park restaurant. They won’t shop in a theme park store.’ Shanghai Disney has proven all of that wrong. There are still some design concessions we have to make based on where we are, but now companies that hire us want the Western standard.”

The US\$700 million **Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park**, which opened in November 2018 and earlier this year brought Legacy a

► See LEGACY, page 75



Walkthrough-style live performance and immersive theater elements were incorporated into the *Pacific Rim* and *Road Rage* dark rides for Indonesia’s *Trans Studio* indoor parks. COURTESY TRANS STUDIO CIBUBUR; TRANS STUDIO BALI



Legacy Entertainment’s design work shines in this vividly themed Ferris wheel rendering for *Trans Studio* Bali. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

►LEGACY

Continued from page 74

Best Theme Park award from the **China Cultural & Tourism Development Conference**, represents a resounding achievement for the company.

"For me, our big win at Haichang is that everything in the park is layered and interwoven, and the design is very nuanced and a lot of fun," said Jeffs, noting that Legacy was one of four Western firms that participated in a government-approved conceptual design competition for the project six years ago. "The roller coaster is going above walkways, under walkways, over the river. The rapids ride, which is the world's longest, winds through half of the park. I hope it inspires other people to be more creative with their park design in China."

The destination's original annual attendance estimate of 3.2 million has since been boosted to six million.

Another, more recently opened park master-planned by Legacy is the 76-acre **Dream Bund**, a few hours south of Shanghai in Zhejiang Province. It is located in **Hengdian World Studios**, which is said to be the world's largest film and television center and is famous for its collection of full-scale practical sets that include intricately-crafted recreations of more than a dozen iconic Chinese palaces and locales.

The new park / functioning film studio, styled to evoke Shanghai's Art Deco waterfront district during the first half of the 20th century, has been designed to allow for the concurrent operation of attractions and up to 20 productions. It includes a trolley tour, a historical museum and a hotel modeled after Shanghai's iconic **Broadway Mansions** building.

"We designed this park so that just by changing its signage, it could represent any time between 1900 and 1950," said Jeffs. "It could be made to look more modern, as well."

Other Legacy projects under construction include China's **Chimelong Marine**

Science Museum, located adjacent to **Chimelong Ocean Kingdom** in Zhuhai, China, and expected to be the world's largest indoor theme park at four million square feet; **The Sea Shell**, an aquarium on the Vietnamese resort island of Phú Quốc with a turtle-shaped building design inspired by local ancient mythology, set to open next year; and **Lotte's Magic Forest**, an outdoor theme park in Busan, South Korea, that will debut in mid-2021.

In the meantime, the company is exploring opportunities in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and

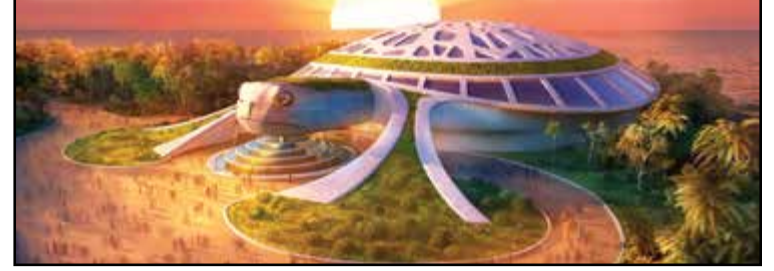
other locations internationally.

For Jeffs, who was born in Irvine, California, and virtually grew up at **Knott's Berry Farm** and **Disneyland**, where he would later work during his high school and college years, awaking to the industry every day as an adult is his dream job. "Just being engrossed by it all as a kid and seeing first-hand how guests would use a theme park — that was the most valuable thing that ever could've happened to me."

His colleagues at Legacy Entertainment share his intense love of the medium.

"We're very passionate

Forthcoming projects from Legacy Entertainment include **The Sea Shell**, a turtle-shaped aquarium rising on a resort island in Vietnam. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT



about advancing it and putting great work out there," said Jeffs. "When theme parks are done well, they are as good or better than any other entertainment

medium. When all the gears are clicking and the pistons are firing, it's as great as any movie or any piece of theater."

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China's **Chimelong Marine Science Center** under construction. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT



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► 2020 safety seminars and conferences preview — page 80 / Drones complete safety inspections — page 88

Disney Skyliner expands Walt Disney World transportation network

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — **Walt Disney World Resort** added a fourth mode of complimentary public transportation on Sept. 29 when the resort opened Disney Skyliner, a gondola lift system that connects two of the resort's four theme parks and four of its 20-plus resort hotels and accommodation offerings. Disney Skyliner, which the resort calls "the most magical flight on earth," operates in the same manner as a ski resort's gondola lift system utilizing a moving cable with attached vehicles (gondolas). At Disney, these gondolas, nearly 300 in total, can accommodate up to 10 passengers per cabin or six passengers in the system's wheelchair-accessible cabins.

Disney Skyliner fills a gap in transportation options for the **Epcot** and **Disney's Hollywood Studios** parks and the resort hotels in that area, which previously had only two options of complimentary transportation: bus and, in some cases, boat. The system has three lines with four routes that connects five stations/terminals along five miles of cable. But Disney Skyliner is more than just another mode of complimentary transportation at Walt Disney World.

"Disney Skyliner is so much more than getting from point A to B. It's an experience," said **Thomas Mazloun**, Walt Disney World Resort's senior vice president of resort and transportation. "You get a whole new appreciation of Walt Disney World



Disney Skyliner's nearly 300 gondolas soar over the Walt Disney World Resort, connecting Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and four of the resorts hotels, including the Disney's new Riviera Resort (opening in December). Each spacious gondola can accommodate up to 10 passengers (inset).

COURTESY
WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT
from up there."

The Skyliner's cabins are not air-conditioned, but the windows of a capsule are tinted to reduce direct sunlight and each contains multiple vents with a design that focuses on cross-ventilation. The vents are screened and located at the top of the cabins on the two long sides and on the wall opposite of the door. Passengers can slide them shut should it ever get too chilly or too windy. There are also vents near the floor, beneath the benches.

Walt Disney World Resort has a long tradition



of innovative transportation options that began at the opening of the Florida resort in 1971, with its monorail system and ferryboats connecting the resort's parking areas, hotels, and the **Magic Kingdom** around and across Bay Lake. In 1982, with the addition of Epcot, the resort added an additional monorail line connecting it with the Magic Kingdom's transportation hub and parking lot. **Disney's Animal Kingdom** is the only remaining park of the resort's four for which bus transportation is the only means of compli-

mentary access.

Disney Skyliner experienced a malfunction on Oct. 5, less than a week after it officially opened. The incident resulted in hundreds of passengers being stranded, some for three hours.

The transportation system was closed to the public for over a week as a result, and it was reopened with limited service on Oct. 14 accompanied by an official statement:

"We know many of you have been looking for an update on Disney Skyliner and are glad to share that

FAST FACTS

Disney Skyliner routes and travel times

- Disney's Hollywood Studios to Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort: **5 minutes**
- Epcot to Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort: **12 minutes**
- Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort to Disney's Riviera Resort: **3 minutes**
- Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort to Disney's Art of Animation and Pop Century Resorts: **5 minutes**

it has reopened to guests today. Following a complete review with the manufacturer, we've made adjustments to our processes and training, and we are improving how we communicate with guests during their flight with Disney Skyliner. We again offer our deepest apologies to the guests impacted by the malfunction that resulted in extended operating delays on Oct. 5. Similar to ski lift systems, Disney Skyliner may slow or come to some stops during the ride, particularly when we need to accommodate guests who require additional time to load their cabin. We want to assure you that the comfort of every guest is important to us."

Disney Skyliner has since resumed regular operations.

•disney.com



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Annual Skycoaster Safety Seminar swings its way into Cedar Point

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Skycoaster, a company of Ride Entertainment, has hosted the Skycoaster Safety Seminar annually. Each year, a different host park welcomes attendees. On Sept. 26-28, Cedar Point, “America’s Roller Coast,” served as the training site.

“The entire weekend went extremely well,” said Lance Beatty, managing director of Skycoaster. “The weather was beautiful, and we had participants from Europe, Mexico and Canada. The strong turnout demonstrates the continued demand for this event, which allows site controllers to receive hands-on training.”

During the training, instructions came from Skycoaster’s partners. Mile High Rigging conducted a session on “Cable Inspection,” KCL Engineering discussed “Lighting Systems,” Joytech shared expertise on “Specialized Videos Systems” and High Energy Sports gave instruction in “Flight Suit Inspection.”

“Skycoaster is a ride unlike any other, and that is why we make our seminar unique,” said Mark Rosenzweig, Ride



Participants in the Skycoaster Safety Seminar came from across the U.S. and three foreign countries. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment’s managing director of business development. “We appreciate our partners taking time out to share in-depth information with site controllers.”

Enrollment typically runs from 65 to 80 participants. Organizers feel hands-on training is the most effective. Working with company policy, state laws and guidance restrictions, trainers are able to share best practices with flight harnesses, cable

demonstrations and new developments such as self-editing video demonstrations.

“The seminar is focused on what we call senior site controllers — site controllers who act as a liaison between us and the parks,” said Beatty. “But it is not limited to them. We encourage any site controller, maintenance personnel or anyone involved with the operation of the ride to attend.”

On the final day, testing was completed, and training includ-

ed participants taking flights in the new Sky Sled harness. This newer harness allows single or double riders to experience the Skycoaster flight in a seated position rather than the well-known “flying” position.

“The debut of the Sky Sled capped off several years of research, and with new products, like lighting and video systems, we work to ensure that Skycoaster increases the bottom line of each owner,”

said Adam Sandy, president of business development, Ride Entertainment.

Testing involves administering a written exam, which upon completion allows certified site controllers to return to their respective parks and recertify fellow employees for the upcoming season.

“We’ve seen interest continue as we moved the seminar out of classrooms and back to amusement parks so site controllers can learn in a hands-on environment,” said Sandy.

“We got great feedback,” Beatty added. “We made a couple of changes to the workshops this year that were geared more toward what the operators might encounter on a daily basis.”

The Skycoaster Safety Seminar has been offered since 1992, the year of the first installation of the upcharge thrill ride. After being acquired by Ride Entertainment in 2005, the seminars have continued and have seen more engagement from participants. In 2016, the seminar was taken out of a classroom and incorporated into an existing Skycoaster site. Rosenzweig believes this to be tremendously

► See SKYCOASTER, page 79



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►SKYCOASTER Continued from page 78

beneficial for attendees.

"A lot of the people who attend the seminar are at supervisory levels that don't allow them to visit a lot of other parks. Our attendees are like sponges; they are able to absorb so much during the weekend — whether it is managing a queue line, operating a ride platform or even seeing Halloween décor, it's all a part of learning best practices from each other," Rosenzweig told *Amusement Today*.

"It makes all the difference," added Beatty. "For the attendees to be able to see and take part in the workshops goes further than just reviewing everything in a classroom setting. That was one of the biggest responses from the attendees."

In years past, the seminar was held in January. Operating parks in that month were admittedly limited. Since moving it to early fall, more parks now have the opportunity to be host sites. "Since the move, we have had numerous parks ask to host every year," said Beatty. "We try to balance it between location, park operating hours and what kind of new experience we can offer attendees."

"Any time Cedar Point is able to host industry friends, we're honored — and all for it," Cedar Point Vice President and General Manager **Jason McClure** told *AT*. "When we learn together and from each other, we're all the more equipped to provide guests and visitors with safe and memorable experiences."

As many participants were

first-time visitors to Cedar Point, park hosts showcased the strengths of the mega-park, from beachfront activities on Lake Erie to Halloween Haunt offerings to Cedar Point's award-winning collection of roller coasters. Four of the park's roller coasters have received Golden Tickets in certain categories from *Amusement Today*. Rosenzweig praised the Cedar Point team for the incredible hospitality shown to the fellow amusement industry professionals.

According to Ride Entertainment, more than 30 million "flights" have been given at close to 100 locations since Skycoaster was introduced in 1992.

The safety seminar will be held at **Six Flags Over Texas** in 2020, which will also feature the Sky Sled harness.

Seminar attendees strengthened safety skills in all areas of Skycoaster operation. Ride Entertainment prides itself on offering hands-on training at an operating Skycoaster site (above middle). Introductory and welcoming materials (above right) are prepared by Ride Entertainment's Mark Rosenzweig. Participants were also able to network at host facility Cedar Point (below). COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



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Planning for 2020 industry safety seminars, conferences underway



The 2020 International Ride Training, LLC, Ride Operator Certification School Ride Camp is scheduled for Feb. 4-7, at The Park at OWA in Foley, Ala. It includes instruction in both classroom settings as well as hands-on training. COURTESY INTERNATIONAL RIDE TRAINING LLC

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Organizers for the various amusement industry's safety seminars and conferences have been hard at work putting together brochures and calendars for their association's 2020 events.

Beginning in January, these safety events allow participants to customize their course curricula based on their

needs and skills.

The following is a look at some of those events.

AIMS International

The 2020 AIMS International Safety Seminar has been set for Jan. 12-17 in Galveston, Texas, with all classes held in the **Galveston Convention Center**. This is the third year AIMS has met at this location.

AIMS International, a non-profit association dedicated to improving amusement industry safety, offers approximately 200 classes during its seminar. These classes are fully customized to students' needs. Specific seminar times and classes are currently being prepared.

The organization normally offers 200 classes that are fully customized to students' needs as well as hands-on experiences. Classes are taught by volunteer industry professionals.

Mary Jane Brewer will experience her first Safety Seminar as AIMS executive director during the 2020 event. She succeeded **Karen Oertley** last June.

The 2019-2020 officers are: **Franceen Gonzales**, president; **Tony Claassen**, vice president; **George Tsa**, secretary, and **Linda Viox**, treasurer.

AIMS certification testing is set for Friday afternoon after a morning of review and studying.

Registration and information may be obtained by visiting aimsintl.org.

Midwest Safety and Operations Conference

This is a brand-new safety event being sponsored by the **Greater Ohio Showmen's Association**. It has been set for March 2 at the **Kalahari Resort**, Sandusky, Ohio.

This new conference will offer courses in both portable attractions and permanent attractions. There will be class instruction with hands-on training and participatory play training. There will also be certified training by the **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)**.

NAARSO

NAARSO's 33rd **Annual Safety Forum** is set for Jan. 26-31, at the **Kingston Resort Hilton** in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. NAARSO, is a non-

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SEMINARS

Continued from page 80

profit organization dedicated to safety and provides resources for amusement industry professionals, safety seminars and certifications.

Sherrie Kontos, NAARSO office administrator, said in early October that most of the planning for the 2020 event had been completed.

New for 2020 is the Certified Pool Operator (CPO) Course, which is a national certification valid for five years. Required by many states, this comprehensive training program provides attendees with a detailed approach to aquatic facility safety and management.

"The hands-on portion of the forum will not be held at **Broadway at the Beach** this year," Kontos said. "Instead, we have arranged for some of our traveling show members to bring in rides and equipment. The equipment will be highlighted in various stages of installation, with some being



NAARSO's 33rd Annual Safety Forum is set for Jan. 26-31 at the Kingston Resort Hilton in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. NAARSO's forum includes both classroom instruction and hands-on training. Here, some of NAARSO's attendees participate in a hands-on session last year at Broadway at the Beach in Myrtle Beach. For the 2020 hands-on portion, forum organizers have arranged for some of its traveling show members to bring in rides and equipment. COURTESY NAARSO

fully opened, some partially, and some packaged for travel."

The forum kicks off on Sun-

day, Jan. 26, with registration during the morning hours, followed by NAARSO's annual

membership meeting and orientation. The opening reception is scheduled for that evening.

Classes are held Monday-Thursday, Jan. 27-30. Students are able to select courses based on their skill levels and needs.

A review session for the NAARSO testing is set for the morning of Friday, Jan. 31, with NAARSO certification tests that afternoon. The closing dinner has been set for that evening.

In addition, AIMS certification testing will be offered on Tuesday evening, Jan. 28. The NAARSO operations exam has been set for Thursday evening, Jan. 30.

More information may be obtained at naarso.com.

International Ride Training, LLC (IRT)

Ride Camp 2020, IRT's 10th annual **International Ride Operator Certification (iROC)** has been set for Feb. 4-7, at **The Park at OWA** in Foley, Alabama.

This three-day program focuses on training the trainer. Instructors learn best practices on how to teach safety and service procedures to other instructors. It offers an iROC Instructor Certification.

Participants are operators of hard rides, aquatics, go-karts, ziplines, inflatables and more.

Seminar planners update instructor materials annually to support training and to improve ride operator performance in parks of any size.

More information may be obtained by visiting IRT online at ridetraining.com.

Northwestern Showmen's Club (NWSC)

The 2020 **NWSC Safety Seminar** is set to run Feb. 17-20 in Portland, Oregon, with testing set for Feb. 21. This marks the 30th annual event for the showmen's club. Two days of the seminar will be held at **Oaks Amusement Park**. Three days will be held at the **Fun-tastic Shows Campus**.

Each year, classes change according to the needs of the industry. The club's seminar organizer, **Bev Burback**, encourages industry members to send in class suggestions and ideas.

Classes run 7 a.m. through 5 p.m. each day of the instructional four-day period. Testing will take place on the fifth day of the event.

All meals will be provided daily, with a special banquet dinner set for the final day.

Carnival Tech Testing for certification is free with the

► See SEMINARS, page 84



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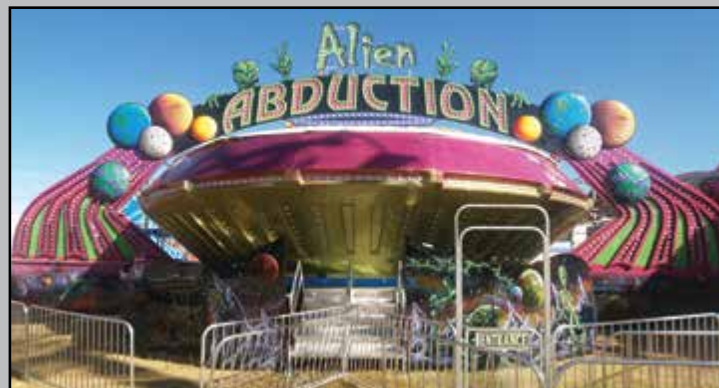
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Wisdom updates Alien Abduction for Powers Great American Midways



Powers Great American Midways (PGAM) took delivery a new Alien Abduction from Wisdom Rides of America, Inc., Merino, Colo., just in time for the opening of the North Carolina State Fair, Oct. 17-27, in Raleigh. According to show owner Corky Powers, updates on the new ride include galvanized steel framework and a state-of-the-art light package. PGAM has had several versions of the popular ride dating back to the mid-1980s, when it purchased a Gravitron from Wisdom.
 COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

►SEMINARS

Continued from page 82

seminar. Certification testing with NAARSO, AIMS, CPR and First Aid also are offered but additional fees are required.

The NWSC Safety Seminar is aligned with **Portland Community College** for accreditation in their Continuing Education Program providing four CEU's for participation and completion of the seminar.

More information may be obtained at the website: nwshowmensclub.com.

Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar

The 2020 spring Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar for amusement ride inspectors will be held Feb. 25-27, at the **Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center**, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Agricul-

ture Bureau of Ride and Measurement Standards presents this safety forum twice a year, fall and spring. The fall event was held Nov. 5-7.

Seminar participants choose specialty courses they feel are beneficial for their career path, job description, abilities and employer benefit.

Some of the course areas include inflatables, rides, haunted attractions, extreme sports, water attractions, go-karts and bumper boats. The majority of attendees come from Pennsylvania and neighboring states; however, there are traditionally representatives from across the U.S.

The inspection testing, while independent of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, however, is sanctioned by the department using **Slaggett Risk Management**.

More information may be obtained at paridesafety.com.



A.J. Slaggett, seen here instructing one of the sessions during a fall forum of the Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar, is among many of the industry professionals who participate in this program. The 2020 spring Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar has been set for Feb. 25-27. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



NEWS & NOTES

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10 reasons to attend the 2020 AIMS Safety Seminar in Galveston, Texas

With the world watching through the lens of social media and extensive mainstream media coverage, amusement industry safety, employee training and education are the best ways to ensure attractions are equipped to avoid and prevent accidents. The **AIMS Safety Seminar** is a once-a-year opportunity to learn from industry experts in a weeklong educational setting. Here are 10 great reasons to attend the 2020 AIMS Safety Seminar:



1. Safety is the # 1 priority in the amusement industry.

2. The **AIMS Safety Seminar** is the top-rated amusement industry safety seminar worldwide.

3. The seminar attracts more than 450 students from all areas of the industry: theme and amusement parks, water parks, carnivals, zoos, FECs and other attractions. From

maintenance and operations workers to top management as well as industry suppliers, you will learn from your peers and make friendships. These are connections you can use for years to come.

4. Classes are taught by more than 100 instructors — all top-quality industry experts in their fields. More great connections!

5. No other seminar offers such a diverse range of classes. At the AIMS Seminar, you can choose classes that fit your needs.

6. Learning takes place in the classroom, where students and instructors exchange information, as well as through hands-on opportunities at local attractions.

7. AIMS offers certifications in maintenance, operations, ride inspection and aquatics. A Certified Pool Operator course is also offered.

8. Tuition is \$645 and includes class materials, an opening reception, all lunches and snack breaks, a completion certificate and CEU from **Old Dominion University**. AIMS has a discounted rate of \$115 per night at the **Galveston Hilton** with free parking!

9. You can apply for scholarships! **IAAPA** provides five scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar in memory of **Alan Ramsay**. Application forms can be found at aimsintl.org. **OABA** offers four scholarships to OABA members who are first-time Safety Seminar attendees. Contact oaba@oaba.org for more information.

10. AIMS delivers! More than 92% of students who attend an AIMS Safety Seminar plan to return to another AIMS Safety Seminar.

A complete schedule and class list, along with hotel and other information, can be found at aimsintl.org. For more information about the AIMS Safety Seminar, please email info@aimsintl.org or contact **Holly Coston**, seminar manager at 714.697.6654.

Please stop by and visit the AIMS International booth #4527 at **IAAPA Expo**!

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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Advanced fire detection enhances safety, simplifies maintenance



Smoke detection equipment must distinguish smoke from a fire vs. ride effects and dust. A centralized detector allows for annual testing in an accessible location. COURTESY XTRALIS

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — When **Universal Studios Hollywood** revamped its original Jurassic Park ride into the Jurassic World ride with the latest animatronics and effects. It also had to update its smoke detection technology to make it safer and easier to maintain.

“One of the [smoke detection] challenges for the Jurassic World attraction is that it is essentially a boat ride with quite a bit of fog and mist, along with

simulated pyrotechnics in some areas,” said **Thomas Johnson**, a manager with **Callide Technical**, a Southern California-based design build fire safety integrator. According to Johnson, such conditions can trigger false alarms, which theme parks want to avoid because it has the potential to shut the ride down for hours of testing.

Changes in the fire code since the original Jurassic Park ride was first commissioned also mandated more complete smoke detection coverage and put an even greater premium on simplified testing and servicing.

Callide Technical and Universal Studios Hollywood turned to an advanced aspirating smoke detection technology system called the Vesda-E VEA, by **Xtralis**, a global provider of aspirating fire detection equipment.

The VEA draws in air through small, unobtrusive sample points in each room or area. The air is analyzed using laser-based technology at a central unit to identify the presence of smoke particles in a continuous process. The centralized detector combined with full integrity monitoring allows the annual functional smoke test to be conducted in an easily accessible location and conducted in a fraction of the time. Seven VEA devices are utilized inside the Jurassic World ride with 14 to 35 sampling points per unit.

This approach offers earlier detection by detecting very small amounts of smoke particles, potentially before a fire begins to flame and burn. In many cases, early warning smoke detection can initiate timely evacuation and allow intervention to prevent fire spreading to other areas. As a multi-channel, addressable system, the VEA central unit can also pinpoint the exact location of the alarm.

The aspirating system also reduces nuisance alarms by more clearly distinguishing between smoke, fire and dust and can even be adjusted to refine the settings for a specific application.

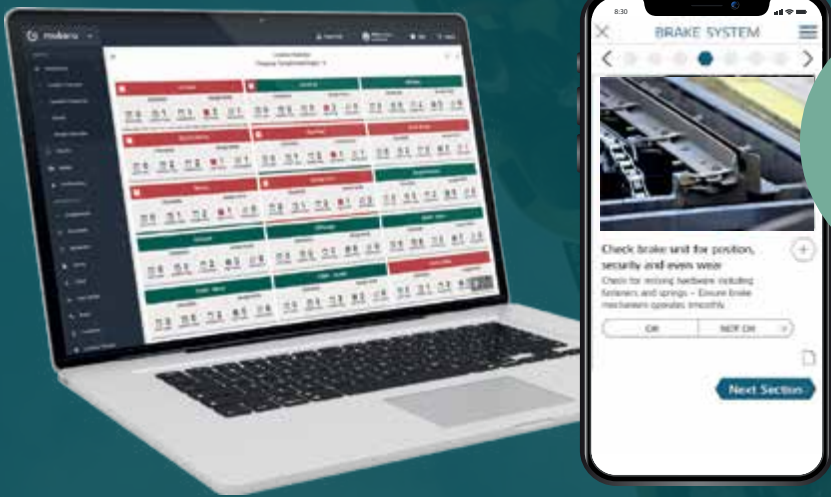
“One of the theme park’s goals was good aesthetics, with small, unobtrusive sampling points that would not detract from the ride experience,” said Johnson.

The small size of the VEA sampling points renders them virtually invisible, making them inconspicuous to theme park guests and a perfect solution for interior designers.

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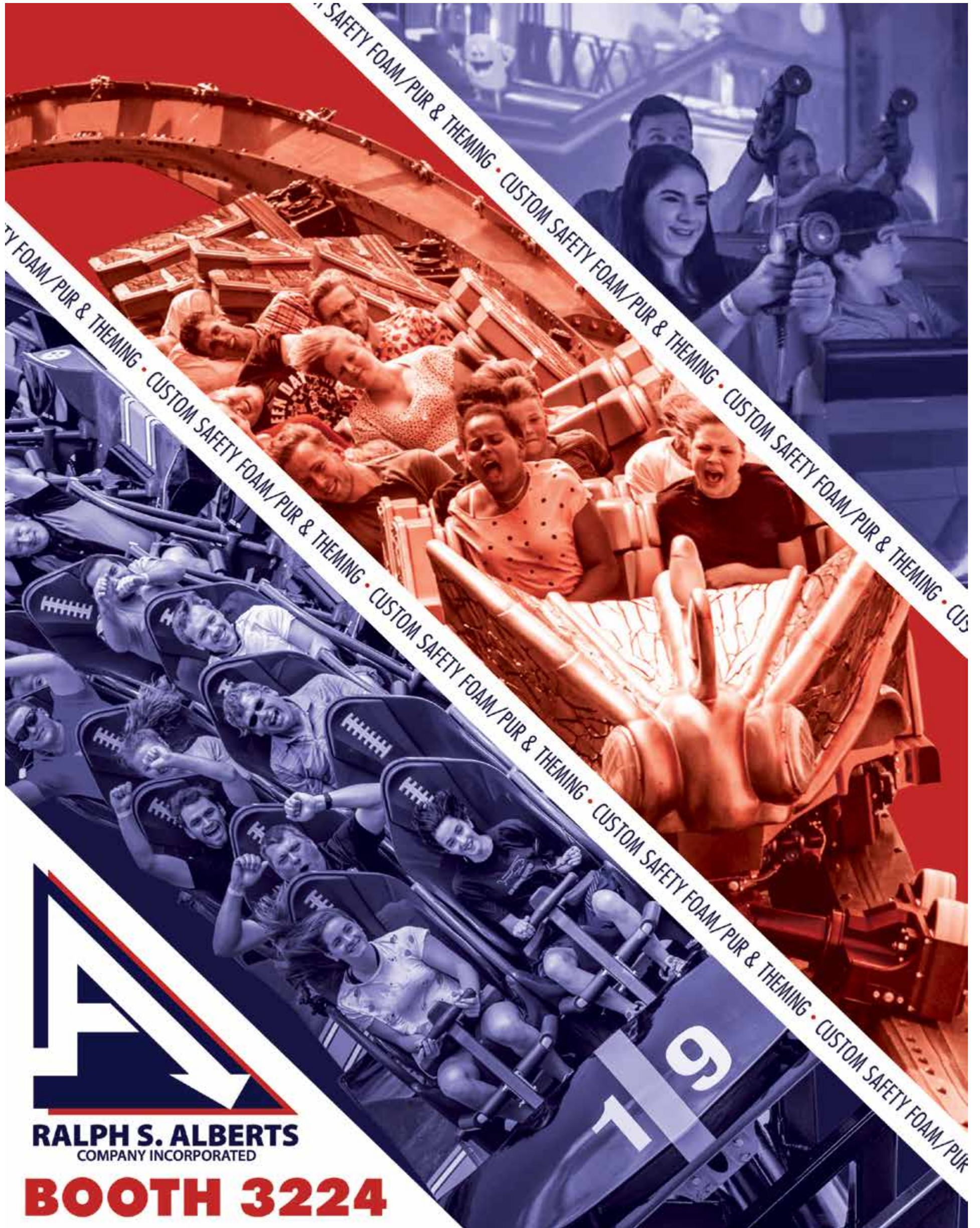


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Morey's Piers completes safety inspections using drone technology



The military grade Aeryon SkyRanger drone (far right) offers detailed views from heights and hard-to-reach places within Morey's Piers. Two pilots (middle) are used at all times during flights.. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS



WILDWOOD, N.J. — For the second year in a row, **Morey's Piers** has contracted with New Jersey-based **MISTRAS Group** to complete off-season ride inspections using the Aeryon SkyRanger drone.

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Typically reserved for oil and gas refineries, this is a relatively new technology within the amusement park industry, but one that increases the safety and efficiency of the inspection process. For years, the inspection process involved scaling entire coasters by hand or renting heavy lifts to achieve necessary access.

"Anything can happen in October, like inclement weather or cold, damp days preventing or delaying the climbing of rides," said **Joe DeLuca**, maintenance planner at Morey's Piers. "Inspections that used to take a month to complete while climbing steel tracks now only take one week and are much safer."

The eight-pound drone aircraft, using a built-in custom camera, provides high-resolution pictures of tight spaces, odd angles and hard-to-reach areas on rides like the 156-foot-tall Giant Wheel. The photos are sent through an encrypted network to the screen of a pilot's control unit in real time. They're also saved to a memory card for examination later. Structural imperfections, like loose bolts or rusted welds, are flagged for repair by the Morey's Piers grounds crew.

This is not a hobbyist drone, but rather a sophisticated camera with a zoom lens that brings out crystal clear detail with ease.

"It's like looking through a telescope," said drone pilot **Matt Phillips**, pointing to a 30-times optical zoom. "We can capture the words off of the book you're reading from 70 feet away."

Among the challenges of drone inspection are heavy winds (30 mph is the threshold) and hawks, who can sometimes mistake a drone for prey and attempt to dive-bomb it. A co-pilot is always on site to watch out for such flight hazards.

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Funding secured for Las Vegas Monorail expansion



LAS VEGAS — The Las Vegas Monorail Company (LVMC) has secured long-term financing needed to help fund construction of a new station at Sands Avenue and to replace a short-term loan facility. The new station will provide a direct connection to the Sands Expo Center, The Venetian and The Palazzo resorts, and to the MSG Sphere (currently under construction). The transaction is part of the company's expansion program, which will also include a later extension to the Mandalay Bay Resort, with proximity to Allegiant Stadium. In September, LVMC announced a sponsorship program led by Pharris Media, Inc., to promote its "green" advertising initiative.
COURTESY LAS VEGAS MONORAIL COMPANY

Pool Director Training Course dates announced

BRICK, N.J. — **Pool Operation Management (POM)** of New Jersey has released its Pool Director Training Course dates. This one-day classroom instruction class is an approved provider program per the **New Jersey Department of Health** to meet the requirement for pools larger than 2,000 square feet to have the designated adult supervisor possessing the Pool Director Training certification. Pool directors have until Dec. 31, 2019, to meet this requirement.



This one-day class runs 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (EST). Topics covered include general pool director knowledge, filtration and pool equipment, water chemistry and water testing, sanitizers, water problems and pool troubleshooting, New Jersey Public Recreational Bathing Code (PRB NJAC 8:26) Interpretation; supervision and staff training, and injury and drowning prevention.

After the classroom instruction, there is a one-hour exam of 25 questions. Participants require a 72% grade in order to pass. Once passed, participants will receive a certification in 3-4 weeks which will be valid for three years.

The cost of the class is \$200. Any registration received less than two weeks from course start would also require a \$25 late fee.

Remaining course dates available in New Jersey are:

- Nov. 7 — Woodbridge
- Nov. 8 — Toms River
- Dec. 13 — East Brunswick

Participants can register by calling (732) 451-1040 or online at the POM website.

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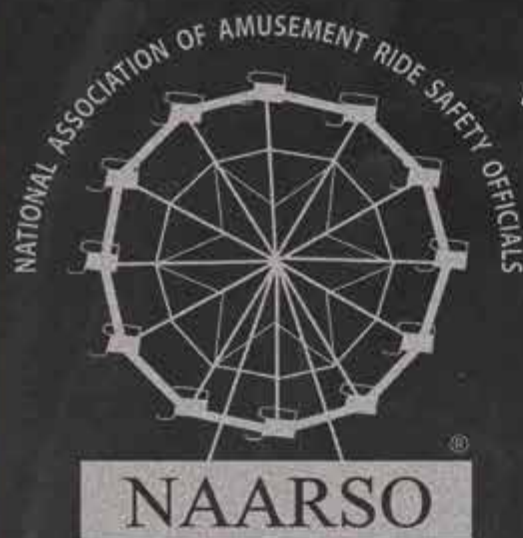
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- Classes end after 12 noon on Friday, January 31.
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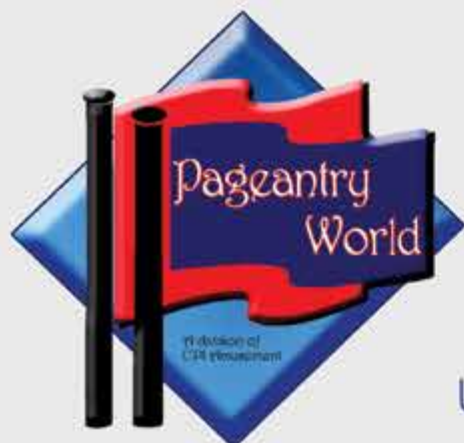
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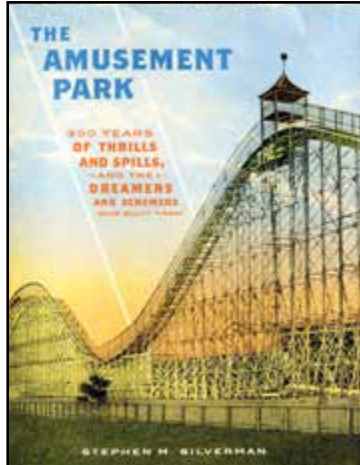
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The Amusement Park — a long ride of industry history

REVIEW: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com



People who work in the amusement park industry are incredibly diverse in their experience. Some are newcomers whose knowledge is a blank canvas; others have a lifetime career under their belt. Many have fulfilled numerous positions in multiple locations, while others dedicated countless years in a single park. People who can boast a great deal of expertise are bound to be surprised just how much history and knowledge that they don't know. **Steven Silverman**, having previously authored a dozen books, turns his enthusiasm to the world of amusement parks with incredible detail. The simply titled *The Amusement Park* is the result of a massive undertaking of research and is told through anecdotes of people and places that spread across nine centuries. Silverman's grasp of the English language is on display on each and every page. The book is stunningly written while being both entertaining and vastly informative.

The Amusement Park is not a slave to chronology, but the general flow does follow a path much like a roller coaster with many ups and downs, sometimes curving back to where it once came from. Starting with the **Bartholomew Fair** in 1133 A.D., the roots of any fair, festival or circus that are familiar today can be traced here. Take these pleasures to the mid-1800s and you'll see giant observations wheels (Vienna, London), pleasure gardens and the emergence of desserts, rides and "spectaculars" (reenactments and lavish productions). Along the way, the reader meets P.T. Barnum, is drawn into the origins of roller coasters (ice slides and Russian mountains), and witnesses how innovation can lead to fame. For instance, The **Mauch Chunk Railway** was not conceived as a pleasure railway but as a means to transport coal. That changed, and its place in history became a much more famous one.

Silverman never claims to place everyone or every location in a flattering light. The book is centuries of industry tales, both good and bad. Coney Island and its influence spotlights the Switchback Railway, Elephantine Colossus (its first ride), the birth of the hot dog and all the grit that comes with Coney's history. In 1893, the **World's Columbian Exposition** in Chicago outbid New York. Knowing it's good to have something to make a publicity splash all over the world, Ferris' 250-foot-diameter wheel made a statement. Atlantic City and the

birth of the boardwalk — and salt-water taffy — is all told with spirited detail. Seen through the lens of modern times, some recounted tales of various places are downright horrific or barbaric. An original dunking game of throwing a baseball at a target encompassed a racist overtone. The electrocution of an elephant made available to ticket holders was quite simply agonizingly cruel.

Types of parks are often noted, and various examples of trolley parks — and why they were created — are featured. Denver parks and the families involved are put into a 20th century perspective. Pennsylvania parks such as **Hersheypark**, **Knoebels**, **Kennywood** and **Dorney Park** are given an overview. Legendary coasters, particularly of the 1920s, are spotlighted.

A book on amusement industry history couldn't hope to be complete without **Walt Disney**, his influence and his parks. With his attractions at the 1964-65 **World's Fair**, it was evident that taking a brand beyond the state (and park) was possible. In time, it created the E-Ticket. Other California parks are paralleled alongside Disney with similar results not always guaranteed.

In the book's "Finishing Touches," Silverman (brilliantly) notes that success came not from corporate bean counters or those who tried to emulate others but those who came up with something truly different. **Walt Disney World's** trajectory from opening to today, as well as **Cedar Point's** history summarized into becoming the Coaster Capitol serve as examples of forward thinking.

The sheer amount of knowledge and research within the pages of *The Amusement Park* cannot be understated. No matter one's tenure within the industry, every reader is sure to learn something. This book is a must for anyone with interest in the business of fun. It's a book one will want to return to frequently to refresh details over and over. Published by **Black Dog & Leventhal**, it sells for \$34.95.

National Roller Coaster Museum progress report



A side view of the National Roller Coaster Museum progress in Plainview, Texas, on October 24. The original archive building stands on the left, the new connecting building at center and the new 30 foot high Mark Moore addition on the right. Only roofing panels are missing in closing up the building from the exterior, to make it weather-tight. COURTESY HUNTER NOVOTNY



The Moore addition will include a full mezzanine for additional exhibits. At left is an interior view looking toward the side wall and mezzanine framing. At right is a view from the northwest corner looking at the back wall and mezzanine framing. COURTESY HUNTER NOVOTNY



Under the 2,800-square-foot mezzanine with the connector building in the rear. On the right will be a full length timeline, highlighting the history of the roller coaster. Note the stack of wood donated from Rocky Mountain Coaster. The planks, which may be used for mezzanine flooring, are from the former Gwazi coaster at Busch Gardens Tampa. COURTESY HUNTER NOVOTNY

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